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# NAPOLEON: THE MAN

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[*Photo*: *Bulloz, Paris.*

BONAPARTE AS FIRST CONSUL.
From the picture by David.

*Frontispiece.*]

# NAPOLEON: THE MAN

BY R. McNAIR WILSON

AUTHOR OF "THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1927

TO

DORIS

"Long, long will they tell of him under the thatched roof.
In fifty years the humble dwelling will know no other history . . .

* * * * *

Children, through this village I saw him ride, followed by Kings."

# PREFACE

One of my friends has pointed out to me that many of the incidents in this book appear also in Herr Ludwig's brilliant work "Napoleon." Let me, therefore, state that when the final proofs of this work left my hands I had not so much as seen Herr Ludwig's book. I have now read it. The picture of Napoleon which Herr Ludwig presents, admirable as it is, is not my view of Napoleon. The man whom I have tried to portray in these following pages has never yet, so far as I know, been portrayed in any biography published in or translated into the English language.

R. McNair Wilson.

London,
*August* 1927.

# NAPOLEON'S WORLD

NAPOLEON never dies; but it has seemed to me that, in the year 1918, "at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month," his spirit was quickened and transformed and, once again, renewed in its ancient habitations. For November 11, 1918, marked not only the end of the Great War; it marked also the consummation of the wars of the French Revolution and of Napoleon. In that hour the thrones of Prussia and of Austria were cast down and the last strongholds of feudalism were yielded up to mankind. In that hour, too, the policy of William Pitt, which for a century had dominated the foreign policy of this country, was abandoned, finally, in favour of the policy of the Man of the Revolution.

The French Revolution, and the War of American Independence which preceded it by a few years, were something more than mighty bids for freedom. They were great spiritual facts. They had their origins in the souls of men; they proclaimed that man had come to a knowledge of his stature. They proclaimed above all the nobility of human nature.

Such a proclamation was necessarily a challenge to all the nobilities of blood. For it set common folk on a level with kings and cast down the mighty from their seats. It asserted new standards of aristocracy and even afforded a fresh revelation of religion. Priests as well as kings were its natural enemies.

And so, in France, kings and priests went forth to

quench the fire of liberty and, failing to quench it, were consumed by it. The fire, fanned by their hatred, roared across Europe, devouring and destroying; terror was awakened in all but the stoutest hearts. And then, suddenly, the lambent flames diminished so that, for a moment, it seemed as if the Revolution must burn itself out. In that hour Napoleon became the master of the French people.

Already, in his own soul, this young general had disciplined the fiery impulse of freedom. He had learned to understand the idea underlying the Revolution—the idea that a nation derives its sovereignty not from its rulers but from itself, from the mass of the people—and to love it; he had learned also that the sovereignty of a nation, its self-control, can be established only by iron sacrifice and iron determination. He was a soldier and he knew that the "New World" required, most of all, discipline and restraint.

And so he taught France how to assert the Revolution —her "self-control"—and how to make secure the Aristocracy of Human Nature. He gave to all Frenchmen equal laws and equal rights and levied of all Frenchmen equal taxes; he proclaimed religious toleration; he created a nobility of merit to replace the nobility of blood. The twentieth century had begun a hundred years before its time.

Both the kings and the priests realized that "self-control" such as this was a menace far more deadly than the guillotine or the mob. The tide of hatred against Napoleon swelled from month to month. Armies began to march against him and priests called down the vengeance of their gods on his head. But he smote the armies and bridled the priests. Once he smote them, and twice and three times. And then there was peace in Europe and hope for free men in the whole world.

It was but a breathing space; soon the kings and the priests returned to attack their mortal enemy. Then Napoleon made his plan for the settlement of Europe. He desired a close alliance between England and France. "Everything is possible for humanity," he said, "to England and France United." He desired a strong Germany and a week Prussia. He desired to see Italy regain her independence and Poland rise again from her ashes. He desired that Austria and Russia might be curbed.

England refused him and he fell, and the plan of William Pitt ("the balance of power" as it was called) was adopted. France was humbled; the idea of the Revolution, that a nation derives its sovereignty from itself, was banned; the Aristocracy of Human Nature—"self-control"—was set aside in favour of the aristocracy of blood. Italy was handed back to Austria and the Pope and the Bourbons. Poland was given to be devoured by Austria and Prussia and Russia. Germany became subject to the militarism of Prussia. Let the Aristocracy of Human Nature break, if it could, through that fence of steel!

It was easy, as it happened, for the kings to accomplish all this because chance had placed in their hands a most potent and a most unexpected weapon. Napoleon, attacked and again attacked, had been forced into the iron way of a conqueror. He, who sought only to make France great, had been compelled to endow her also with glory. And the awful light of that glory had blinded the eyes of the nations. Men saw only fire and sword, the smoke of great cities given to the flames, the red glare of burning villages. They did not see the secret springs of a new faith which had turned every peasant of France into a soldier of the Revolution, a crusader of the common folk.

And so, in all other lands except the land of France, the proud spirit of Nationhood, of Patriotism, was divorced

from the gentle spirit of Humanity. In France the common folk fought for the red blood of humanity; but in Russia and Prussia and Austria, and in England too, the common folk became the soldiers of the blue blood of kings. Patriotism and Democracy had been separated; kings and priests had become, actually, symbols of resistance to a foreign yoke.

Thus, the peoples of Europe suffered themselves to be led forth by the Old World against the New World; they joined hands with their oppressors to destroy and trample under foot the "self-control" which had lain almost within their grasp. And for a hundred years Royalism and Clericalism battened on their ignorance. Patriotism was worn by aristocracy as its sign. The wars of the Balance of Power burned up generation after generation of common men until Prussia, supported at first by England, partook of the body of Germany and with her mailed fist began to threaten the world.

Napoleon had foreseen that danger and had warned England and Europe of its coming. He had tried, by all the means in his power, to strengthen Germany at the expense of Prussia and to make of England the friend of France. Had he succeeded the Great War could never have been fought.

But thanks to one man England and France were saved from the utter ruin to which the policy of William Pitt seemed to have condemned them both. King Edward VII had the same conception of kingship as had Napoleon. He broke with the tradition of his own throne; he broke with the tradition of his own Foreign Office. A great Liberal, he turned, as by instinct, to Republican France and established with her a new friendship. The moment for which Napoleon had hoped and prayed and worked had arrived at last.

The Treaty of Versailles, with all its faults, is the fruit

of that *Entente Cordiale* extended to include the American People; and the Treaty of Versailles is, essentially, the plan of the Soldier-Statesman who was overthrown by England and by Prussia at the Battle of Waterloo.

This "New World," in which, since 1918, we have begun to live is, in fact, Napoleon's world—the world he hoped for and tried to create, the world for the sake of the coming of which he gave himself and all that he possessed to utter ruin. In order to understand this world, its ideals, its aims, its emotions, it is necessary to have known the Man of the French Revolution.

That is my excuse for this book—a book from which I take leave with a sense of almost bitter regret. For who can describe Napoleon as he has deserved to be described and portrayed?

R. McNair Wilson.

London,
*February* 1927.

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# BOOK I

## THE EXILE

"Life is a burden to me because the men with whom I live, and shall probably always live, have morals as distant from mine as the light of the moon differs from that of the sun."

NAPOLEON, aged 16.

# CHAPTER I

## A WOMAN OF CORSICA

The girl grew pale and then, in full flood, the blood rushed back to her cheeks. She raised her beautiful head, which had been bowed in prayer, and glanced wildly round the Cathedral where others, her friends, knelt also. The voices of the officiating priests came faintly to her ears. Should she try to remain till Mass was ended ?

Again her cheeks lost their blood. She rose to her feet and moved silently to the door of the church. She emerged into the heat of the pure sunlight of the August morning. She began to run down the narrow Ajaccian street towards her home.

Would she be able to reach home before her child was born ?

There were French soldiers lounging at the street corners, but they stood aside to let her pass. A faint cry escaped her lips. For a moment she faltered, leaning against the side of the house. The soldiers, whom even at this moment she could hate, had not heard her cry. She drew her breath in new resolution. She must not give way, she, a woman of Corsica, before these Frenchmen.

She stumbled on to her door and passed from the sunlight to the shadow. The stairs of the house ascended before her. She grasped at the banisters and began to drag herself upwards. . . .

" Caterina ! Francesca ! . . . Oh, where are the women ? " . . .

Her voice failed and she hung, trembling, to the support. It was not possible to go farther. . . . Her lips moved in a prayer to the Virgin, whose feast-day it was.



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"Caterina!" . . .

She put forth her last strength. She reached the top of the stair. Even her bedroom, six yards away, lay far beyond her strength. The door of her parlour invited. She staggered into the room. She sank, fainting, on the carpeted floor. . . .

A clock, somewhere, began to strike the hour of eleven.

Napoleon Bonaparte had been born into the world.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STING OF MEMORY

A STRANGE world it was, into which, on this 15th day of August, in the year 1769, the child had rushed thus precipitately. As Letitia, his mother, then a girl of nineteen, lay alone on the couch of her little parlour, listening to the first cries of the new-born baby, her heart must have been filled with thanksgiving to the Good God and the Virgin. For what dangers had not already threatened that young life!

It is likely, since that is the way of mothers, that, in the first relief of her delivery, her mind ranged swiftly across the five years that had elapsed since, on a June day, she had been married to her dear Charles in the same Cathedral from which, a few moments ago, she had made her escape. Then she was a girl of but thirteen and a half years of age. Now, four children had been born to her of whom two already lay in their graves. Those two, her firstborn, Napoleon, and his sister Anna, had lived but a few weeks, and yet, in the months before they were born, life had been easy and tranquil enough. Could she expect that this poor babe, formed through months of horror and hardship, would survive?

She glanced at the child, which lay on the floor, and saw that it was small and puny—in that respect unlike her eldest living son, Joseph, who had been plump and robust from the day of his birth. Here, surely, before her eyes were the evil effects of the wild and terrible life she had been compelled to lead during these last three months—since the day when the soldiers of the French King triumphed finally over her people.

The sting of the memory of that day was in her flesh still, a rankling wound which could never be healed. Had the sting penetrated also to the flesh of her young child ? Had the child on the floor won already from her wild blood the spirit which had actually, two months before his birth, brought her to the fringe of a battlefield ?

Would the soul which had animated Paoli and his heroes animate also this new life ?

Letitia, it may well be believed, saw again at that moment the splendid figure of the man Pascal Paoli who, since the day of their marriage, had been her own and her husband's idol, the man who had been the idol of every Corsican. How she had worshipped that man ; how she had rejoiced that, already, she was the mother of a son who should, some day, be enrolled among his followers !

Paoli, then, had had sore need of followers. And yet how brave he had been with his cry that the Corsicans who had driven out the soldiers of Genoa would not submit to see the soldiers of the French King come in their stead ! Corsicans, he had exclaimed, were not to be sold like sheep. . . .

And then her husband and all his friends had vowed to be free or to die ; let it be war with the French King who sought to possess their island, they had cried, no matter how great might be his power. . . .

*" Guerra, guerra ! Libertà ò more."*

That was in May, a year ago ; and it seemed as if the Good God had heard their vow and sent his angels to help them because, before the leaves fell in October, Paoli and his men had beaten the soldiers of the French King by the shores of the sea, under the very walls of Ajaccio itself.

Her husband had been with the hero on that great day of battle, as his aide-de-camp, and she had waited for him, near at hand, while the battle raged, that she might press him to her heart in the hour of victory. . . .

It was then, in these very days of rapture, that the newly-born child had been conceived. This child might

date the first dim beginnings of his life from the victory of Paoli's heroes over the French King.

Alas ! short-lived victory ! In less than seven months the glory had faded away, leaving only ruin and despair.

Then it had been necessary to fly to the mountains and hide in the caves. And there had been the crossing of the Liamone River, that raging torrent, in which the horse she was riding had lost its footing and been swept away down stream. Surely the Holy Mother herself had intervened to enable her to keep a cool head that day, so as to guide the terrified animal back to the river bank.

Paoli was far away now, an exile, driven beyond the sea ; and the soldiers of the French King were lounging in the streets under these very windows.

It had been necessary, no doubt, to make submission.

## CHAPTER III

### A DREAM OF TALL SHIPS

Her servants found the young mother at last, and the faithful Caterina or Francesca gathered the child to her arms. Then the mother was carried from the parlour to her bedroom behind the dining-room.

Thither came Charles, her husband, to see his new son, and Charles's mother, Grandmamma Bonaparte, who lived in the house and attended Mass every day for her first grandchild, Joseph.

"Now," said Grandmamma Bonaparte, "I shall attend two Masses each day instead of one."

A little later, another resident in the house, Charles's Uncle Lucien, the Archdeacon of Ajaccio, hobbled in as fast as his gouty knees would allow him, and then, later still, when the news had reached them, came Aunt Gertrude, Charles's only sister, with her husband, and Letitia's mother, Grandmamma Fesch, who lived in a house of her own with her six-year-old son, Joseph, the child of her second marriage.

It was not only on the newly-born baby that the fierce hardships of the war against the French King had told; Letitia also had suffered in health and strength. She must have come to great weakness in the days which followed her ordeal, for the power to suckle her child left her. Though the step was very distasteful to the good Corsican family, with its rigid ideas about the duties of motherhood, the employment of a wet-nurse became absolutely necessary if the sickly infant was to be given a chance to live.

The duty of finding this nurse was undertaken, it may confidently be assumed, by the two grandmothers and

Aunt Gertrude. Their choice fell finally on the young wife of a sailor named Ilari. Camilla Ilari came to the Bonaparte house with her child to take up her duty as the infant Napoleon's foster-mother.

She was a pious woman and very kind ; but she shared the bitterness of all the Corsicans against the French King's soldiers who possessed the Ajaccio Citadel and made free with the Ajaccio streets. Like all the Corsicans of that time, too, she lived with one eye on the sea. Was it not by the sea that their hero, Paoli, had made his escape ? And would it not be by the sea that, sooner or later, he would return to avenge his own and his people's wrongs ? Camilla's husband, the sailor, had told her doubtless of the tall ships of the King of England which had borne the hero away, and he had told her, also, perhaps, that England was an island like Corsica. Paoli would be safe in his exile among the English folk who loved their freedom as passionately as did the Corsican folk and who hated the King of France not less fiercely.

That probably was the table-talk when the family—and this term included Caterina and Camilla as well as Grandmamma Bonaparte and Uncle Lucien—sat down to its meals, for there was no member of the family who had not loved the exiled hero or who did not hope, ardently, for his return. Thus, the babe which Camilla clasped to her breast would surely be looked on as a new recruit for " the Cause " in the coming days of deliverance. . . . Had not Paoli, before he sailed away, said that some day the babe's father, Charles, should succeed him in the rulership of Corsica ?

The head of the household himself loved to repeat that promise. It was true that he had made submission to the French King, but a submission which is enforced at the point of the sword can be renounced when the sword threatens no longer. Grandmamma Bonaparte and Aunt Gertrude were firmly convinced that, before very long, Charles would be the leader of his country.

It is not so certain that Letitia shared their opinion, for a young wife has better opportunities, even than a mother

or a sister, of taking the measure of a man. Letitia loved Charles, but she could not blind herself to the fact that his mother had spoiled him. Now that Paoli had sailed away, Charles, she could see, was settling down very comfortably at home; he was even getting on good terms with the French Governor in the Citadel. He had his books, too, shelves and shelves of them, and he had decided to take the degree of Doctor of Laws at the University of Pisa that very autumn. It is scarcely of such stuff that the leaders of men, and specially of such men as Corsica breeds, are compounded.

So, when Charles spoke about the rulership which should come to him, it may be that Letitia kept silence.

## CHAPTER IV

### A GENTLEMAN

And that silence of the beautiful girl of nineteen, whose heart—if we may believe her son—was still glowing for the lost leader, must have deepened when Charles returned from his visit to Pisa. For her gay and handsome young husband actually brought back with him, in addition to the honour of Doctor of Laws, proofs of a sort that his family was of noble blood.

It was November, three months after the birth of Napoleon, six months after the final victory of the French King, a year after the short-lived victory of Paoli. Only a year ago, as Letitia knew, there was not a man in all Corsica who would have given a fig for those "letters patent of nobility," about the possession of which her husband was now so greatly excited. Charles himself would not have given a fig for them, for it was the proudest boast of every Corsican that noble blood had no place and no recognition in his native land. In Corsica the servant addressed his master and mistress by their Christian names; and master and servant sat down together, like elder and younger brother, to the same table.

Why, then, this new eagerness to be counted a gentleman?

The answer was not long withheld. The young wife, whose knowledge of the world was confined to her own people, learned that in the Kingdom of France a gentleman was looked on as a superior being, and enjoyed all manner of rights and privileges which were denied to simple folk. She learned, too, that the King of France had ordered that there should be gentlefolk and common folk in Corsica

just as there were gentlefolk and common folk in his own dominions.

Very soon, if one was to live comfortably and cut a decent figure in the world, it would be necessary to prove that there was blue blood flowing in one's veins.

It was not for a Corsican wife to dispute with her husband. Letitia's silence remained, so far as is known, unbroken. At least in public; but in the nursery, where her little lads were growing up, she must have spoken much and often, since in the eyes of both her lads the exiled hero, Paoli, became a god, even as she herself became a goddess. That fervour of love could have been implanted in young hearts only by an equal fervour. The charming, easy-going Charles, the man who spent a year's income on a banquet to celebrate his taking his Doctor's degree, and who soon began to entertain French officers at his table, could never have inspired it.

For which reason, very early in his life, the young Napoleon adopted to his father an attitude entirely different from that which his mother won from him.

"My father," he said at St. Helena, "was a man of intellect and culture, but too fond of pleasure to occupy his time with us children. He would sometimes attempt to excuse our faults. 'Let them be,' said my mother, 'that is not your business; it is for me to look after them.' She did watch over us in truth with a solicitude without equal. Low sentiments, ungenerous feelings were checked, banished; she allowed nothing to reach our young spirits that was not fine and elevated. She had the head of a man on the body of a woman. She was both tender and severe. She punished wrongdoing and rewarded good conduct; she recognized impartially our good and bad actions."

Letitia gave her little son a drum and a wooden sword; at the age of eighty-two she recalled with enthusiasm the fact that the child had covered the walls of his nursery with pictures of soldiers—men to fight for Paoli against the French King.

Meanwhile the gracious husband of this Spartan mother was advancing farther and farther in the good graces of the soldiers of the French King and was even entertaining the French Governor of Corsica, Marbeuf, in his home.

He could not, however, for all his good nature, quell the spirit of the child Napoleon. Charles's way of getting his second son to obey him was to utter the threat: "I'll tell your mother."

When the little lad was old enough to walk, he and his brother Joseph were taken out by the nursery governess, Caterina, who came from the extreme north of the island. Sometimes they would go, on those walks, to the Citadel, to watch the soldiers of the King of France; but more often they would pass under the walls of the town to the seashore, where the boats lay, and where, frequently, Camilla Ilari's sailor husband would be found playing with his own children. Caterina, as Napoleon recalled long afterwards, was very good to her little charges during these walks and played with them and made them laugh. And so the Citadel and the sea became fixed in their young minds—the Citadel with its soldiers, the sea with its ships.

Letitia was forced to leave the boys a great deal in the care of Caterina because, before Napoleon was two years old, a daughter had been born to her. The coming of that child caused Grandmamma Bonaparte to hear three Masses every day instead of only two.

It also caused Napoleon to receive public baptism—though in such a household he must have been baptized, privately, long before. He and his newly-born sister, Anna Maria, were baptized together in the Cathedral.

And after that Napoleon—perhaps because Caterina could not control him so well as could his mother—began to show signs of quick temper. Letitia decided to send the naughty boy, as a kind of disciplinary punishment, to the only girls' school in Ajaccio. He was but five years old; but the sting of that humiliation rankled for ever. It was still rankling forty-six years later at St. Helena.

" I was a pretty child," said Napoleon, " the only boy at the school, and the girls liked me. But I always had my stockings down at heel and, when we went for walks, I held tight to the hand of a certain little girl, which caused many quarrels. My boy comrades, jealous of my Giacominetta, joined these two facts and put them to rhyme. I could not appear in the streets but they followed me shouting :

> ' Stockings half down, he knows no better ;
> And yet he makes love to Giacominetta.'

" I could not stand being made sport of. Sticks or stones, I seized whatever was at hand ; I rushed blindly among them all. Happily there was always somebody there to prevent things going too far, but I would never stop to reckon the number of my tormentors."

Letitia had not bargained for street fighting. She promptly took the lad away from the girls' school and sent him to the Jesuit College where Joseph was already installed.

## CHAPTER V

### SOLDIERS' BREAD

School days for Napoleon were happy days. For the lad was surrounded on every side by people who loved him and by people who desired, above all things, that he should grow up a clean-minded, decent-living man. In these present days the fact that Letitia Bonaparte taught all her children to like soap and water and to be careful of their bodily cleanliness may not seem to signify much. But it should be remembered that people were far less clean a hundred years ago than they are now. Boys and girls who learned the uses of the tub were rare birds; mothers who insisted on baths and scrubbing brushes were rarer still.

Nor did Letitia's care stop at the body. She wanted her boys to add to their cleanliness and manliness, religious devotion. Joseph and Napoleon were compelled to go regularly to church, and the latter used to recall an occasion on which, because he showed reluctance to attend High Mass, his mother boxed his ears.

Letitia had her own reasons for this uncompromising attitude. She came of a devout family and was herself a devout woman; but her husband, Charles, did not bother himself about religion. He preferred his library—which is said to have contained so many as 1,000 volumes—to the Cathedral, and he was ready, at all times, to air his unorthodox opinions.

In every respect Charles began to copy the French and change his Corsican habits. Whereas Letitia ate her meals quickly and rose from table, always, on principle, before her appetite was satisfied, Charles loved to linger

over his food. He liked good wine, too, and good clothes, and he grew to like, more and more, the society of Frenchmen, whose quick wits and agreeable manners charmed him. Charles's own manners were polished—and as he had visited Rome and other parts of Italy and was, in his way, a brilliant student, he could talk well. To such people the society of pious women and unlettered, earnest men is always exceedingly distasteful.

The boy Napoleon, clearly, distrusted the good manners of his father just as cordially as he distrusted his father's easy addiction to pleasure and—as apparently he thought—shameful fondness for the French. Had he not done so he could scarcely, a few years later, have written the following bitter words:

"What spectacle shall I see in my country? My compatriots carrying chains and kissing in fear the hand which oppresses them. They are no longer those brave Corsicans whom a hero [Paoli] inspired with his virtues, the enemies of tyrants, of luxury, of vile courtiers.

"Proud, filled with a noble feeling of his individual importance, a Corsican was happy if he had employed his day over public affairs. The night passed away in the tender arms of a dear wife, understanding and enthusiasm effaced all the trials of the day. Tenderness, nature made those nights comparable to those of the gods. But with liberty they have vanished like dreams, those happy days. Frenchmen, not content with having torn from us all that we cherished, you have even corrupted our morals!"

When he wrote these lines Napoleon was sixteen. He had been living in France for seven years. He had not seen Corsica since he was a boy of nine years of age. His father, moreover, had been dead for a year. The picture, therefore, is the picture of the writer's own home life; the materials for it must have been drawn from his own experience or from information given to him by members of his own family.

Probably these materials were drawn unconsciously; for it is certain that Letitia never spoke against her husband

before her boys and it is equally certain that both boys paid to their father in his lifetime, and after his death, the most punctilious respect. Yet actions speak where words are mute. Napoleon, even as a schoolboy, had set his young compass away from the direction in which his father was moving. Even as a schoolboy he admired only the soldierly virtues; loved hardship and hated ease; loved practical things and hated theories; loved men but was "not happy with women." Above all, this boy loved his native land and hated her oppressors, the French. And his manners, even as a child, were noted by the whole family to be very uncouth. Joseph had charming manners like his father; Napoleon was the rough soldier even in the nursery.

But—and this is a fact of great interest—Napoleon could, when he chose, exhibit the most charming manners imaginable. Every one who knew him is emphatic on that point.

His uncouth manners, then, were evidently a deliberate choice. He, at any rate, was not going to ape the French or "kiss in fear the hand which oppressed him."

His mother, in her old age, recalled how this serious-minded boy, "though very fond of good things," would often, while attending the Jesuit College at Ajaccio, exchange the white bread that had been given him for his luncheon for a soldier's coarse bread. She scolded him for his folly, and he replied that, as he was going to be a soldier, he wished to accustom himself to hardships; and, besides, he liked the soldiers' bread best.

There is something, surely, of pathos in the picture of the tiny lad giving his sandwiches to the French soldiers and taking from them, in exchange, their rough fare. Perhaps that was the only means which lay in his power of inflicting humiliation—albeit unapprehended—on Frenchmen and at the same time proving to himself the superiority of his own people. I am inclined to think that Jacob gave not more contemptuously his mess of red pottage to Esau than did the child Napoleon give his white bread to the soldiers of France.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SHIPS AND THE SOLDIERS

THE soldiers' bread was bread of preparation, Passover bread. The boy, in eating it, vowed himself to the life of hardship. There is but little doubt that he vowed himself also to the service of Corsica. In the days when the tall ships of the King of England should bring Paoli back again, there would be one patriot at least ready to fight and, if necessary, to die at his side.

"*Guerra, guerra! Libertà ò more.*"

When Napoleon was seven his little sister Maria Anna died. But shortly before her death another boy, Lucien, had been born. The family was prospering at this time, for Charles's blue blood and his attentions to the French officers had won him recognition by the King of France as a "Corsican Nobleman." He had actually been appointed one of the Twelve Noblemen chosen to govern the island on behalf of the King and had, in addition, gained the post of Assessor to the Court of Ajaccio. This post carried a substantial salary.

His new honours delighted Napoleon's father greatly and were the excuse for much fresh extravagance. A Nobleman, said Charles, must possess a house worthy of his high position. So a fine "terrace" and a "gallery" were added to the Bonaparte Mansion, and rich banquets were spread for the enjoyment of the French Governor and his officers.

Meanwhile, however, other Corsicans who had not "kissed the hands which oppressed them" were giving much trouble to their conquerors. There were disturbances

all over the island and the French officials became more and more unpopular.

Joseph and Napoleon, boys of nine and eight years, heard, of course, both at school and in the streets, news of everything that was going on. They heard that brave men were ready, even in those dark days, to dare the anger of the King of France. They heard also of the punishments which the King of France inflicted on those who had rebelled against him.

Their hearts were with the rebels; and they blushed to know that their own father had become a servant of the King.

Napoleon, though, probably consoled himself with the thought that he was growing up, and that, very soon, he would be able to break away from his father's authority. By common testimony he was the leader of the band of boys with whom he consorted, and, no doubt, he inspired these, his first followers, with his own enthusiasm, and expounded to them his young faith that soon the ships of England would bring back Paoli from that island to Corsica.

England was, thus, Napoleon's angel; France his deadly foe. His eyes, when he gazed seaward, those strange grey eyes of his, were gentle with love and hope; but when he turned them towards the Citadel they grew cold and hard.

## CHAPTER VII

### A STAGGERING BLOW

A STAGGERING blow awaited the young patriot—a blow which, in its first effects, blotted out for him all the joy of life. This was nothing less than the announcement to him by his father that he was to go to school in France and himself become a soldier of the French King.

There is no record of the scene which occurred when Napoleon first learned his fate. But when, twenty-five years later, the proposal was made by the town of Montpellier, where Charles died and was buried, that a monument should be erected to his memory bearing the inscription:

> "Come forth from the Grave.
> Thy son, Napoleon, raises thee to immortality,"

Napoleon replied:

"Twenty years have passed since this event" (his father's death) "occurred; it can be of no interest to the public; we will not talk of it any further."

While the boy shuddered at the prospect of becoming a French soldier, his father was full of satisfaction and self-congratulation. Charles had not been idle in the congenial work of getting himself on in the world, and he had prospered amazingly. The old French King, Louis XV, most profligate of monarchs, had died and his grandson, Louis XVI, had mounted his throne. It was necessary that good Frenchmen in Corsica, as elsewhere, should hasten to pay their respects to the new monarch. Charles managed to get himself chosen as one of those who should go to the French Court at Versailles to proclaim the loyalty of Corsica.

He was tremendously excited about this visit and spent unlimited care and money on his Court dress. But he had an eye to business as well as to pleasure and honour. It was not for nothing that he had welcomed the French Governor Marbeuf into his house and put himself to the trouble of composing a sonnet on the occasion of Marbeuf's marriage. The Frenchman had it in his power to recommend Napoleon for a place as a "King's Scholar" in one of the military academies—that is to say, for a free education of the most distinguished kind.

Marbeuf did recommend Napoleon, and Charles then ran about among his friends in Ajaccio and got statements written to the effect that he was too poor to pay for his son's education out of his own pocket—which was not true. Armed with these documents, and with his new Court dress packed snugly in his trunk, he set forth for Paris.

His wife and family, no doubt, saw him off at the quay. I have often tried to picture the scene and to conjure up in my mind the expressions which the faces of the various participants in it must have worn—Grandmamma Bonaparte's face, and Letitia's face; Uncle Lucien's red face; Joseph's face; the face of Napoleon, who knew by this time, of course, the object of the visit. Without a doubt the whole family had already had the opportunity of admiring Charles in his Court dress and had had the meaning of that dress fully explained to them. Without a doubt, too, the gay father had told his children all that he knew about the splendour of Versailles, the most polished and the most powerful Court on earth. Charles belonged, most emphatically, to that company all of whose geese are swans. Thus, as the ship drew away from the harbour, his sons would be able to picture the glories awaiting their sire. Joseph perhaps thrilled a little at the thought, for he was his father's son; in Napoleon's mind there could be but one idea: his father had gone to kiss the hand which oppressed him.

Charles, perhaps, guessed what his second son was thinking, because, on his return, he made haste to announce

that Napoleon was to be a French sailor, and not a French soldier. He was to enter the Navy of King Louis when his education was complete. There was, perhaps, a small crumb of comfort for the outraged lad. In any case, the decision was made and was irrevocable—since what could a boy of nine years do to alter it ? Charles bade his wife prepare for the departure of her sons—for he had secured a place also for Joseph, who was destined for the Church.

On December 12, 1778, a miserable little party started out from the Bonaparte house to go down to the harbour. There was Charles himself, who was returning on a new mission to Paris and Versailles, there was Joseph aged ten, there was Napoleon aged nine, and there was young Fesch, Grandmamma Fesch's son by her second husband, who, at fifteen years of age, was going to Aix to begin his studies for the Church. These were the travellers. To bid them farewell came Grandmamma Bonaparte and Grandmamma Fesch, Uncle Lucien and Aunt Gertrude, the faithful Caterina and Camilla Ilari and her children.

As the boat moved away the boys waved their handkerchiefs, but their eyes were wet. The women on the quay did not attempt to restrain their tears.

"I still remember," said Napoleon at St. Helena, "what tears Caterina shed when I left Corsica for France, though it was forty years ago."

## CHAPTER VIII

### A TEAR FOR JOSEPH

What must have been Napoleon's thoughts as the snow-clad mountains of Corsica, those mountains which had mothered his tender years, faded into the distance of the sea? Never before had he been separated from his mother, nor from Caterina, nor from Grandmamma Bonaparte. His whole world was falling away from him.

And the world to which he travelled offered nothing but misery and loneliness. He could not speak a word of French.

Moreover, he knew that this separation from home must last a very long time—probably many years. And even a month resembles eternity in the mind of a child. Would he ever see his mother again? Or Lucien his three-year-old brother? Or his dear Caterina? Or Eliza aged two? or the baby Louis, at whose christening, a few weeks before, there had been such a great rejoicing? Would he ever again visit the grave of his little sister, Maria Anna, who had been his playmate all the five years of her life and at whose death life had seemed, suddenly, so empty? What had become now of his brave hopes and resolves, those hopes and resolves which, already, had made a patriot of him? It was in vain, surely, that he had eaten his soldiers' bread and dreamed his dreams.

The smiling face of his father, anxious, no doubt, to soften the pain of parting for his little lads—for Charles was nothing if not good-hearted in a facile way—cannot have afforded any real comfort, though it must have given a sense of security. Charles was much too well pleased with himself to understand what was passing in the minds

of the boys. His hopeful gaze was set on the future and the future glowed as he scanned it. Had he not, already, been promised a Corsican bishopric for Joseph and a Commission in the Marines for Napoleon? Was he not now on his way to join the gay and splendid throng on the Ambassadors' staircase at Versailles? Within a few days he would be whirling in the greatest and maddest social vortex which the world has ever known, the Court of good King Louis XVI and his lovely young Queen, Marie Antoinette.

All the world knows the picture of Napoleon standing alone on the deck of the *Bellerophon* which carried him away, for ever, from France. But why has no artist painted a picture of the little lad of nine years standing on that other deck on which, for the first time, he was carried into France? It is possible that truth would exhibit in the eyes of the child a melancholy greater even than that which in the picture haunts the eyes of the fallen Emperor.

But youth is ever hopeful, ever interested in new scenes and new faces. And so, perhaps, the first contacts with the pleasant land of France carried their consolation for the joys which had been lost. The party travelled, in the first place, to Aix-en-Province, where the fifteen-year old Fesch (Napoleon's step-uncle) was going to school, and then proceeded to Autun, where Joseph and Napoleon were to begin the study of the French language. The boys bade good-bye to their father on New Year's Day of the year 1779. They were alone, strangers in a strange land, without even the power to make themselves understood.

Nor had the worst blow, which they knew to be in store for them, fallen on them, even yet. Soon, in a month or two at the most, these brothers who could not remember a single day on which they had not been together, were to be separated.

The blow fell on April 20. Charles's efforts had been completely successful, and Napoleon was told to proceed at once to the Military School at Brienne of which, since it had been decided that he "possessed the nobility

necessary for admission into the ranks of the gentlemen who are educated by his Majesty," he had been elected a King's Scholar. He was told, too, that one of the strictest rules of the school was that no boy should ever leave it during the six years of his training ; there were no holidays in the modern sense of that term. This, then, was the end.

The brothers said farewell to each other for the last time, and Joseph, on his own confession, broke down and wept violently. It was different with Napoleon. He " shed only one tear, which he strove in vain to conceal." A worthy priest, who was present at the leave-taking, told Joseph afterwards that Napoleon's single tear showed as much feeling as all his own.

## CHAPTER IX

### A GOOD BOY

The Military School at Brienne is known to have been a hotbed of schoolboy vice at the time at which Napoleon entered it. Only the sons of French noblemen were admitted to the school, and these lads, no doubt, aped, on a small scale, the manners and morals which had made the Court of the late King Louis XV of France stink in the nostrils of the world. Some of them aped, too, the arrogance of that great nobility which, even then in its twilight, was soon to pay in full, on the scaffolds of the Revolution, its debt to humanity and to the French people. The school at Brienne was compact of pride and prejudice, insolence and snobbery, as well as of laziness and vice.

The young lordlings, who were its pupils, were not, however, solely to blame for this. The system under which they lived and worked was a bad one, the invention of the Benedictine priests who conducted all the Twelve Royal Schools of France. Life was planned on the monastic model. There was no release, no freedom, very restricted intercourse with the outside world and even with parents. The boys heard Mass every day; but even this office was "gabbled through" in a few minutes. Here are all the elements of an unchaste environment.

Further, the pupils at the school were divided into different social types. They were all noble—it was Charles's blue blood which had enabled him to get his son into the school—but they were not all equally important. Some of the boys, for example, were destined to become officers of the King's Guard at Versailles. These were the sons of the great houses. Others were going to the Cavalry

or the Infantry. Others, again, wished to enter the Navy, the Engineers, or the Artillery. These last, the would-be marines, sappers, and gunners, had to pass examinations. There were no examinations for guardsmen, cavalrymen, infantrymen, or for the boys who meant, ultimately, to enter civilian service.

Again, only a small number of boys were King's Scholars—that is, free scholars; in the majority of instances fees were paid by parents for the education provided. Thus, there were rich and poor in the school as well as great and small. There were boys compelled to work hard as well as boys who might do as much or as little as they chose.

Napoleon was poor, a scholar dependent on the King's charity. He was also under the necessity of working hard because he aspired to enter the Navy. And, in social rank, he was the smallest of the small, a miserable Corsican, whose right even to call himself a Frenchman was doubtful and whose blue blood was, as everybody knew, of the palest possible tint. Why, the fellow could scarcely speak a sentence of the King's French!

Napoleon, too, had been brought up by a mother by whom "low sentiments, ungenerous feelings were checked, banished"; and who "allowed nothing to reach our young spirits that was not fine and elevated." He was a "good boy"—the product of a simple home where clean living, of body and of mind, was held to be essential to happiness, both in this world and in the world to come.

A good boy, no matter what his social rank might be, was assured of a tough time at the Military School of Brienne.

The lad's first impression of the school seems to have been one of unspeakable horror. Never, in his darkest moments of loathing of the French, had he conceived of them as such vile and depraved creatures as they now appeared to his candid young eyes. And not only were they depraved; they were bullies also, and snobs. Very soon the boy from Corsica learned exactly what the sons of Noble France thought of him, of his birth and breeding,

of his middle-class morals, of his unspeakable accent and uncouth manners, and of his newly-conquered fatherland. Finding him sensitive to their jeers, these tormentors rejoiced in the discovery of a new sport—Bonaparte baiting. The lad was ensnared into airing his opinions—on life, on morals, on Corsica, on Paoli—and was then told how thankful he should be to have obtained the bounty of good King Louis and to have been admitted—no other Corsican had ever at any time enjoyed such an honour—to the society of real gentlefolk. He was asked, also, where exactly Corsica was situated on the map and how many minutes it had taken to reduce the island to subjection. Cartoons, one of which still exists, were drawn to give point to these questions.

Napoleon shuddered at first; but, after a little, he girded himself to resist.

"If you had been only four to one," he cried, "it would not have mattered. We should have driven you out. But you were ten to one."

That kind of answer merely added to the enjoyment of the tormentors. They nicknamed the little Corsican "Straw Nose," because he pronounced his own name in a manner which suggested the French words "*Paille-au-nez*," and they laughed at his poverty:

"At Brienne," said Napoleon, thirty years afterwards, "I was the poorest of all my schoolfellows. They always had money in their pockets; I never. I was proud, and was most careful that nobody should perceive this. . . . I could neither laugh nor amuse myself like the others. Bonaparte the schoolboy was out of touch with his comrades and he was not popular."

If he was not popular, however, he was sufficiently formidable, and, after a time, as he grew older, the persecutions diminished. Napoleon never refused a fight, and on one occasion defied the mob of his noble foes with the threat:

"I will do you French people all the harm I can."

The lordlings must have laughed as they heard him.

But even they grew to respect a courage, physical and moral, which they could not extinguish. There was going to be no kissing, in this case, as they soon perceived, of the hands that oppressed. And so Napoleon was left more or less in peace.

He showed himself, in these circumstances, a good comrade, and he made a real friend in Bourrienne.

"You never laugh at me," he said once to Bourrienne; "you like me."

Bourrienne has testified that, when Napoleon was charged with special supervision duties at the school, he "preferred going to prison himself to denouncing his comrades who had done wrong." Once again the Corsican gave the "white bread" to the French and kept the "rough bread" for himself.

Life, when the first horror had faded, was not without its interests. Napoleon, driven from human society like a leper, and dumb because of his uneasy command of French, devoted himself earnestly to his studies. He was fortunate in finding two excellent mathematicians in the school, the senior master, Father Patrault, and his assistant Pichegru. Pichegru, whose name was soon to resound through Europe as one of the great Revolutionary Generals, probably gave his first lessons to the boy who, later on, was to become the object of his deadly hatred.

Napoleon distinguished himself in mathematics; he made a poor showing in Latin and in German and in English. But his best subject, probably, was geography—map-reading—for, within a year of entering the school, he was chosen to exhibit his knowledge at the annual "show-day." He found, too, in books, the friendships he could not find in life. There was a library in the school and very soon the lad in charge of it grew impatient at the perpetual demands made on his time by young Bonaparte, who seems to have read all the history and all the biography available. *Plutarch's Lives* was the supreme favourite.

But, in spite of the books, there were moments of awful home-sickness. Brienne lies in the north of France,

to the east of Paris. Its climate is the climate of the north. How the soul of the boy must have hungered for the blue sea and the mountains of his home, for the freedom of his father's vineyards, for the sailing boats of Camilla's husband—and, far beyond all these things, for his mother's love! At St. Helena, the grown man, coming near his death, said once to his doctor:

"You are attached to me, doctor; you think nothing of annoyances, trouble, fatigue, when it is a question of giving me any relief; but all that is very different from the solicitude of a mother. Oh, Mamma Letitia!"

What must the boy of ten or eleven, exiled in that northern prison house, at the mercy of his tormentors, have felt? Napoleon fell sometimes into deep melancholy; but his courage always saved him. Was he not, even yet, one of Paoli's men, driven into exile just as Paoli had been, but cherishing, deep down in his heart, the resolve to return again to his native land and take up arms against her enemies?

It was not his fault that he wore the uniform of the King of France—nevertheless, the fact that he did wear that uniform vexed him sorely and troubled his conscience.

He seems to have felt it necessary to his honour to testify before all his comrades how greatly he loved the Corsican hero whom France had overwhelmed, and how utterly he detested the oppressors of his native land.

The Frenchmen only laughed at him.

THE EARLIEST PORTRAIT OF NAPOLEON, AGED 16.

30.]

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## CHAPTER X

### THE DEATH OF CHARLES

THREE years after he entered the school at Brienne, Napoleon saw his father and mother again. They came together to the school to visit him. Charles was not now in good health and was taking baths at a resort near the school. The couple arrived in their very best clothes. Since it was the height of summer, Charles was arrayed in a silk coat and wore a most impressive wig. He also carried a sword, as befitted his rank of nobleman. Letitia was in white silk decorated with green flowers.

That visit must have been very sweet for the boy; it must have been sweeter still for his mother. For she found that her son had not changed. There was not a trace of snobbery in his character, not a sign of any desire to attach himself to the French nobles who were his companions, or to detach himself from old associations. On the contrary, his one desire was to hear all the news from home. How were his grandmothers? And Uncle Lucien? And Aunt Gertrude? And Caterina, and Camilla and her husband and children? And how were Lucien and Eliza and Louis and the two baby sisters, Pauline and Caroline, who had been born, as he knew from letters, since he left home? Letitia satisfied all these questions. But she went away rather worried because her boy looked so thin and ill.

Two years after that visit, Charles came to see his son again. On this occasion Letitia did not accompany him. He was bringing Lucien, then a boy of nine, to Brienne to begin his studies there.

He was under the necessity of paying for this lad's education until Napoleon should be old enough to leave the school, because two brothers could not receive the Royal bounty at the same time. Charles had also with him his eldest daughter, Eliza, aged seven, for whom he had secured a place as a King's Scholar, *i.e.* a free scholar, at the girls' school at St. Cyr near Versailles.

The poor man was now in very bad health and seems to have taken his son, who was fifteen years old, into his confidence. He told Napoleon, among other things, that Joseph was by no means happy at the prospect of becoming a clergyman and wanted to change his occupation to that of a soldier. Of this step Charles heartily disapproved; but he was not prepared absolutely to forbid it. Charles added that he himself was going to consult the Queen's doctor about the state of his health as soon as he reached Paris.

Napoleon was never to see his father again. Charles was ordered by the Royal physician to return home at once. He did so. In the late autumn—November—of the same year, Letitia gave birth to another son, Jerome. The following February she became a widow.

Charles, at the moment of his death, which, as has been said, occurred at Montpellier, was on his way back to Paris, driven thither by his terrible sufferings—he had cancer of the stomach—to seek medical help. He had Joseph, who was about to enter the Artillery School at Metz, with him and also young Fesch. Joseph was seventeen, Fesch twenty-one. Charles's dying words, spoken in delirium, and reported by Joseph, were about Napoleon for whom he called in most passionate accents.

## CHAPTER XI

### PUSS IN BOOTS

Napoleon was in Paris when his father died. He had failed to obtain a commission in the Navy and had, consequently, been forced to content himself with the prospect of becoming an artilleryman. From Brienne he went, in the October preceding his father's death, and five months before that event, as a "King's Scholar" to the Military School in Paris. He was still, therefore, receiving the charity of his enemies.

He travelled from Brienne by coach. There is no record of the manner in which he left the old school where he had spent nearly six years and in which he had grown from boyhood to adolescence. But a Corsican, who happened to recognize him as he was descending from the coach in Paris, declared afterwards that "young Bonaparte looked like a newcomer; he gaped at everything he saw, and stared about him. His appearance was that of a man whom any scoundrel would try to rob after seeing him."

It was a case of "Rupert coming to town." Nor is this to be wondered at. Let the reader recall the effect on his own mind of his first glimpse of Paris—of the charm of her setting, of the splendour of her palaces, of the immemorial wooing of her spirit. Napoleon had passed through Marseilles as a boy of nine, but he really knew no city save the tiny Ajaccio, with its walls and its Citadel and its parish church, called "the Cathedral"; he had come to the Capital of Civilization.

Paris had a new shock in store for him. This penniless lad, accustomed to frugal living at home and to the monastic life of Brienne, found himself plunged, suddenly, into a

degree of luxurious ease which left him utterly bewildered and made a permanent impression on his mind.

"We were served and fed," he said long afterwards, "in a magnificent manner, treated throughout like young officers accustomed to great luxuries far exceeding those of most of our families. For instance, at dinner they had soup, meat, two entrées, two helpings of dessert; for supper, roast, two entremets, salad, three helpings of dessert, always with a mixture of half wine, half water."

This was more than the eater of "soldiers' bread" could bear with calmness.

"The King's scholars," he wrote to a master at Brienne who had befriended him, "can only learn feelings of vanity and self-satisfaction in place of qualities of the heart. . . . Instead of maintaining a large staff of servants for these pupils and giving them, every day, meals of several courses and keeping up an expensive stud of horses and grooms, would it not be better, of course without interrupting their studies, to compel them to be sufficient for their own wants—that is to say, without compelling them to do their own cooking to let them eat soldiers' bread, or something similar, to accustom them to beat and brush their own clothes, and to clean their own boots and shoes?

"Accustomed to a sober life, to be particular about their appearance, they would become stronger, would endure bad weather better, support courageously the hardships of war and inspire with respect and blind devotion the soldiers who would have to serve under their orders."

There was Letitia's son speaking; there spoke the boy who, in the nursery, had dedicated himself to the soldier's life, that he might win freedom for his country. What a gulf separated Napoleon's ideas from those of the Government of King Louis of France which, actually, declared that the chief object of the Military Academy should be to produce men with agreeable manners and "that polite tone so rare and so difficult to acquire!"

Napoleon's ideas were middle-class ideas, in spite of

poor Charles's blue blood, and that for the sufficient reason that Napoleon himself, again in spite of Charles's blue blood, belonged to the middle class and shared to the fullest extent all its opinions. He did not, however, and this point is important, belong to that branch of the middle class which is engaged in commerce. Had he been an Englishman, instead of a Corsican, we should have said of him that he came of good yeoman stock. Yeomen are but seldom concerned to become aristocrats; rich merchants always desire this transmutation. Napoleon never, at any time, truckled to the lordlings with whom he was educated. He never tried to stand on his supposed nobility. It was nothing to him that he was officially described as a "gentleman cadet." His father might take pride in being recognized as a gentleman of France; it was enough for the son to know himself—still—"one of Paoli's men."

The Paris Academy was therefore informed by the young Bonaparte, just as the school at Brienne had been informed by him, about the glorious history of Corsica and the mighty struggle which the Corsican hero had made against the King of France. When, on one occasion, a kindly Frenchman of the Academy offered to lend Napoleon money, the lad flushed up and replied:

"My mother has already too many expenses and I have no business to increase them by extravagances which are simply imposed on me by the stupid folly of my comrades."

It was well spoken and it was true. For Charles's death had left poor Letitia in straitened circumstances. The gay fellow, no doubt, had improved the family status—as judged by French eyes—and he had managed to get two sons (Napoleon and Lucien) and one daughter (Eliza) educated by the King of France. But he had left, in addition to these children and to Joseph, whose education was far advanced, two younger sons and two younger daughters. Thus his widow found herself with four young children on her hands. She discovered, also, that her late husband's visits to the Court of King Louis, his wardrobe, and his lavish hospitality at home and abroad, had severely depleted the family exchequer. She must have written to

that effect to her son, because, a month after his father's death, Napoleon wrote to her :

"My dear Mother,

"Now that time has begun to soften the first transports of my sorrow, I hasten to express to you the gratitude I feel for all the kindness you have always displayed towards us. Console yourself, dear Mother, circumstances require that you should. We will redouble our care and our gratitude to you—if, by our obedience, we can make up to you in the smallest degree for the inestimable loss of a cherished husband. I finish, dear Mother—my grief compels it—by praying you to calm yours. My health is perfect and my daily prayer is that Heaven may grant you the same. Give my respects to Aunt Gertrude, Grandmamma Bonaparte, and Grandmamma Fesch."

The letter is signed, "Your very humble and very affectionate son."

The writer meant what he said about redoubling his care. He realized now that he had no choice but to work hard and get his commission and so be able to give his mother some help with the education of the other children.

Education, in Napoleon's eyes—and here he agreed with his father—was the inestimable boon. But he could not shut his eyes to the fact that this course meant a double treachery ; treachery to his country and treachery to the King of France whose uniform he should be wearing. Up till now the boy had been acting under compulsion ; but if he entered the French Army of his own will, he could no longer plead that excuse with his soul.

On the other hand, if he managed to escape the French Army, he must inevitably ruin all his late father's plans for his brother Lucien, then at Brienne, and for his sister Eliza, then at St. Cyr, and both being educated by the French King. That would mean adding immeasurably to the heavy burden of his mother.

It was a cruel predicament for a boy of fifteen, and Napoleon felt its cruelty weigh so heavily on him that he

began to brood. Thoughts of suicide entered his mind and dwelt there. Thus, a year later, after he had accepted the King's commission, he wrote :

" Always alone in the midst of men I return to my room to give myself to dreaming and to deliver myself to all the vivacity of my melancholy. In what direction is it turned to-day ? In the direction of death. In the dawn of my days I may still hope to live a long time. I have been absent from my country from six to seven years. What pleasures shall I not taste when I see again, in four months, both my compatriots and my relatives ? From the tender emotions which the remembrance of the pleasures of my childhood makes me feel, may I not conclude that my happiness will then be complete ? What madness, then, leads me to wish for my destruction ? Certainly what is there to do in this world ? Since I must die, would it not be as well to kill myself ? "

He answers these questions by a reference to the deplorable state of Corsica corrupted by her French oppressors, and declares :

" The present picture of my country, and the impossibility of changing it, is therefore a new reason for flying from a world where I am obliged by duty to praise the men whom virtue should make me hate."

No doubt there is something here of the " gloom of youth " ; no doubt, too, many young people talk of suicide. But, on the other hand, the writer does not exaggerate the wretchedness of his own position. He *was* serving the enemy of his Fatherland ; he *was* in duty bound to praise the men whom virtue should make him hate. And yet what could he do ? He knew enough of France now to realize how hopeless must be any Corsican resistance to the French naval and military forces. " The impossibility of changing it " made regrets for the present state of affairs merely vain regrets. By leaving the French Army he could not help Corsica, and he must inevitably add to the already great anxieties of the mother whom he adored.

And yet . . . And yet . . . It was horrible to " kiss

the hand which oppressed him." So horrible that even death seemed better " in the dawn of my days."

But there was one consolation to set against all this misery—a consolation which may very well have played a decisive part in saving the boy from a rash act. Napoleon, like so many other young folk of that day, had become a student of Rousseau. He had thus discovered a Frenchman who shared all his own views about the virtue of the simple life and who actually held up the Corsican nation as a model for mankind.

In that respect Rousseau resembled the Scotsman Boswell, author of the *Life of Johnson*, who at one time had come to Corsica to see Paoli and had written a book about him. Napoleon had devoured a translation of that book while still at Brienne, and his love of England had deepened with every page he read. Now, actually, he found the same sentiments in a French book written before he was born. Rousseau, after painting his well-known picture of the depravity of modern life and urging the need for equality among men, declares :

" There is still to be found in Europe a country capable of making laws ; that is the Island of Corsica. The courage and the constancy with which this brave people has recovered and defended its freedom deserve that some wise man should be found among them to teach them how to preserve it. I have a presentiment that some day this little island will astonish Europe."

Napoleon thrilled as he read. Rousseau became, for the moment, an object of his enthusiasm, and he steeped himself in the philosophy of Rousseau's great book, *The Social Contract.*

That philosophy taught him that it was not only Corsicans who were oppressed by the King of France and his lords ; Frenchmen, also, groaned under the same yoke. Frenchmen also were compelled to kiss in fear the hands which oppressed them. The boys with whom he had been educated at Brienne and at the Military Academy at Paris, those vicious, sneering boys, so proud of their blood, so

scornful of his, were the sons of the real enemies of the common folk of France no less than of the common folk of Corsica.

Napoleon saw suddenly, as in a flash, that his quarrel was not with the French nation, but only with the French King and the French lords who, by their idleness and wickedness—of which he had, as he believed, seen so much —were betraying the people over whom they brutally tyrannized. The King, he told himself, was a traitor to the nation because he and his lords, and the clergy associated with them, had no thought for the happiness of the people who had made him King. The experiences of Brienne left no doubt on this matter in the boy's mind.

"*The people*," he wrote, "*can, at will, take back the sovereignty which it has given.*"

His conscience became easier when he argued in this way. Nor is there any reasonable doubt that he was sincere in his argument. Already, in 1785, the first rumblings of the Revolution might be detected by careful ears. Thousands of Frenchmen thought as this Corsican lad thought, though few, perhaps, had formulated their ideas so precisely as he had. Napoleon, thanks to his strange and difficult position, and to his bitter experiences as a schoolboy, was a revolutionary four years before the actual beginning of the Revolution. He counted himself an officer of the French nation before the French nation was fully aware of its right to possess officers.

In 1785, in the month of September, the lad "went up" for his examination as an officer. His really fine performance as a mathematician carried him through with success if not with great distinction. He was given his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Artillery and was posted, at his own request, to the regiment of La Fère, then in garrison at Valence. His reason for making this request was that the Valence garrison provided the two companies of artillery which were stationed in Corsica.

On the day when the new Lieutenant put on his uniform for the first time, he paid a visit to some old friends of his family, the Permons, who lived in Paris. He was

tremendously self-conscious and shy, but the two little girls of the household did not, on that account, spare him. When he entered the drawing-room the girls saw that his boots were much too big for him—" they were so high and wide that his little, thin legs seemed to be buried in them " —and burst out laughing.

The lad flushed up angrily and remarked to the eldest girl:

" You are nothing but a child."

" And you," cried she, " are nothing but Puss in Boots."

A few days later the Lieutenant called again with a present for his tormentor. This was a cat, in boots, running before a carriage. He brought along with it a pretty little edition of the tale, *Puss in Boots*, which he begged Mademoiselle Permon to keep as a remembrance.

Considering that he was very hard up at the time, this was a handsome way of making amends for his quick temper.

## CHAPTER XII

### MADEMOISELLE BOU

Napoleon reached the town of Valence from Paris on November 5, 1785, when he was sixteen years and three months old—a period of life when few men are placed in charge of troops. He had had an interesting journey in the company of his friend Alexander des Mazis, a lad to whom, during the last year, he had grown attached. The two Lieutenants were conducted from the Military Academy in Paris to the stage-coach by a non-commissioned officer specially told off for this duty. Their conductor paid their fares and handed them each a sum of money for the journey. When the coach reached Chalon on the Saone the lads left it and transferred to a barge (called the " water stage-coach ") on which they travelled on the River Saône to Lyons. Here they caught a second barge which carried them down the River Rhône to Valence. Napoleon was coming south again. He carried with him his commission, signed by King Louis, in which he was described as :

" Napoleone de Buonaparte, second Lieutenant of d'Autume's company of bombardiers in the La Fère regiment of my royal corps of artillery."

He was naturally curious to find out what sort of a man Captain d'Autume, his new chief, might be, and also to discover whether the idle, luxurious life of the Military Academy at Paris was to be repeated in the La Fère regiment. This time a pleasant surprise awaited him. Almost as soon as he reached Valence he realized that he had come to a place of which he could thoroughly approve and to the society of men whom he could respect. During the first few months of his stay, however, he had not much

time for thought, because it was a rule of the French Artillery that a new officer had to serve for a short period in every rank, from that of private upwards, before he took his own place and was received into the comradeship of his brother officers. Napoleon considered this system an excellent one. He spent from November till the middle of January in thus qualifying. On January 18 of the year 1786, he was " passed " as a fully fledged officer.

Meanwhile he had been settling down. His pay was a pound a week and he did not possess a penny beyond his pay, because in no circumstances would he ask his mother or his relatives for help. Consequently it was absolutely necessary to exercise the utmost economy. He had been allotted lodgings in the town, in the house of an old man named Bou who lived with his middle-aged daughter. Mademoiselle Bou conducted a café and a billiard-room. She offered the young officer a room on the first floor, next the billiard-room and facing the street, a noisy room.

Nevertheless the lad was happy in this place. He and old Bou became really good friends, and even the elderly spinster, Mademoiselle Bou, seems to have taken a genuine liking to the earnest, solemn, worried little soldier of sixteen who was her lodger. She did her best to make the poor, homeless boy comfortable, and the heart of the homeless boy went forth to her. Perhaps she was the first woman, since he left his mother, with whom he had had any dealings. Mademoiselle Bou and her old father were like a refreshing draught after the deserts of the Paris Academy with its lounging, bored young men and its weary luxury.

Napoleon remained at the Bous' during the whole time he stayed at Valence. When, the following year, he passed through the town, he spent a night under their roof. Five years later, he was again Mademoiselle Bou's lodger, this time along with his brother Louis ; and, later still, he wrote to his old friend asking if she could accommodate his sister Eliza, as well as himself, when they came to the town.

He paid the Bous about two shillings a week for his room. He was up at dawn and away to the parade ground

—for the regiment worked hard—and he did not return till the evening. When the morning parade was over he usually went to a baker's shop where he got two dry rolls and a glass of water for a penny. This was his breakfast and luncheon combined, and, as a rule, he got nothing more till dinner time. He dined in the evening with his brother lieutenants at an inn called the "Three Pigeons," where he had an arrangement to pay so much a week. His food worked out at about a shilling a day. This was "soldiers' bread" with a vengeance.

Such frugality, however, certainly did not distress Napoleon. On the contrary, he delighted in it and was the more delighted in that his brother officers approved of what he was doing. They might be Frenchmen, soldiers of the King of France, but they were, nevertheless, the kind of men, all of them, whom he admired from the bottom of his heart. At St. Helena he declared of the La Fère regiment:

"It was like a family. The chiefs were like our fathers and they were the bravest and most worthy men in the world, as pure as gold."

Nevertheless the Corsican boy could not forget that he was a Corsican. His uneasy conscience troubled him during all this time, and again and again, in his writings, he betrayed his worry. If he could only *do* something for his country. His active mind ranged about for a means of escape, and one day there came to him the brilliant idea that if he could earn a living as an author he would be able to throw up his commission and go back home. He blazed with the great idea, and then and there resolved that his first book should be a history of his native land.

Those who write history must, however, possess books. Fortunately for Napoleon, M. Bou had a friend who kept a subscription library. The Lieutenant was introduced to this man and promptly became a member. When the library proved too small to supply him with all he required, he used, in addition, to write to Geneva for further volumes. His book-buying, in fact, was his great expense. Napoleon starved his body to feed his authorship. Nothing should stand in the way of his escape from bondage.

"Please send me," he wrote to the Geneva bookseller, shortly after he had come to Valence, "the two last volumes of *The History of the Corsican Revolutions*, by Abbé Germanes. I should be obliged if you would mention what books you have about the Island of Corsica, and which you could get for me promptly. I await your answer to send the money."

Napoleon signed the letter "Buonaparte" merely, and not "de Buonaparte." In other words, he had already dropped the "*de*," the title of nobility, which poor Charles had spent so much trouble in obtaining. It was bad enough to be a French officer; there was no need to add to that regret the shame of trying to pose as a French gentleman.

He had been given an introduction to a parish priest at Valence. The good man was very kind to him and introduced him to two friends of his own, Madame Colombier and her daughter Caroline. Caroline attracted the boy immediately and violently. The solemn little soldier, with his worries and his troublesome conscience, plunged headlong into his first calf-love.

Caroline must have been a kind-hearted girl, for, long years afterwards, Napoleon told one of his friends about her and said that she had made him feel very happy. They ate cherries together. Not only that, but the poor boy actually spent a few shillings on dancing classes in order to be able to dance with her.

How he must have hesitated over that expenditure, which meant the loss, perhaps, of another volume of Corsican history, and so, maybe, delay in the achievement of his great, secret purpose! How sometimes he must have blushed for himself! Where now was the soldiers' bread? Perhaps he took council on the subject with good Mademoiselle Bou, who would tell him, no doubt, that it was but natural that a young girl should wish to dance and but right that her cavalier should be able to gratify that wish.

No wonder Mademoiselle Bou's middle-aged heart was opened to love the little soldier.

Alas! the dancing lessons did not suffice to win the fair Caroline—if, indeed, Napoleon ever tried to win her. She married another man. But when, eighteen years later, her little soldier became the Emperor Napoleon she wrote him a letter. Here is his reply:

"The Camp of Boulogne.

"MADAME,

"Your letter was very pleasant to me. I have always recalled with pleasure your mother and yourself. I shall take the first opportunity of being of service to your brother. I see from your letter that you are living near Lyons; I must therefore blame you for not having come there while I was there, for it would have been a great pleasure to me to see you. Please believe in the sincere wish that I have to be of use to you."

He signed the letter with his own hand: "Napoleon." Nor did he forget what he had written. A little later Caroline was amazed to find that she had been appointed one of the ladies-in-waiting to the Emperor's mother, and that her husband had received a good position in the Office of Woods and Forests. Funnily enough, a few years after that, Napoleon got a letter from his old dancing-master, who had fallen into great poverty. The letter ran:

"SIRE,—He who helped you to make your first steps in the world throws himself on your generosity."

A month later this good man received a note appointing him to a well-paid job.

Having taken his dancing lessons the little subaltern felt that he could accept invitations. He got a number of these, because young officers are always in demand in a garrison town. But it must be confessed that he cut but a poor figure. His clothes, though always well brushed, were the worse for wear and he had very few clothes—probably only the uniform he stood up in. He was apt, moreover, to begin talking about Corsica and Paoli or about Rousseau and the Simple Life; girls do not, as a rule, enjoy discussions of that sort.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOME

Caroline's mother was, in her own way, as fond of Napoleon as was Caroline. She invited the lad to bring his *History of Corsica* to her house and to read it to her. Napoleon, naturally, thrilled at this invitation. He seems, too, to have made some impression with his reading, because Madame Colombier urged him to show the book to her friend the priest. The upshot was that the first two chapters were despatched to the Abbé Raynal, the great scholar, in Marseilles, for his opinion. *Raynal strongly urged Napoleon to continue his work!* Here was inspiration indeed.

Unhappily the regiment was now ordered away from Valence to Lyons because riots had threatened to break out in that city. When the danger passed the regiment was sent on to Douai in the North of France. Napoleon had served for a year and was due a holiday. He applied for leave of absence which was immediately granted him. Indeed, his Colonel allowed him to take an extra month because he had so far to go to reach his home.

From Douai, therefore, on September 1, 1786, the little soldier set out to retrace the steps which, as a miserable, desolate child he had taken seven years before. He was so excited that he could scarcely contain himself. Nevertheless he made a stop at Aix to see his brother Lucien who had suddenly, at eleven years of age, determined not to be a soldier after all, and had consequently quitted the school at Brienne.

Lucien probably could not endure the taunts and the bullying which Napoleon had endured. There was nobody,

it seemed, now that Charles was dead, able to control this boy. Lucien had managed to persuade his mother to allow him to begin studying for the Church. At Aix, Napoleon also saw young Fesch, his step-uncle, now a man of twenty-three. When he reached Valence, he put up, as has been said, with Mademoiselle Bou. He reminded M. Bou that, a few months before, he—M. Bou—had declared that they would never see each other again and that their lodger would forget them.

"You and Mademoiselle," he declared, "are lodged here." He put his hand on his heart and added: "Memories once placed there do not change garrison."

The journey from Valence to Marseilles down the Rhône was all joy; and so was the visit to the Abbé Raynal. This famous man, an immense admirer of England, received the boy graciously and complimented him on his work. Higher praise could not have been won anywhere. Full, therefore, of hope, full of most wonderful confidence in his powers as a writer, Napoleon went, at last, on board ship. For the moment, at any rate, he had left all his troubles behind him. To-morrow he would see, once again, the home which, through all those dark, weary years of exile, had been the beacon lamp of his soul.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AN AUTHOR

I LIKE to picture that home-coming, for it is pleasant to think of the happiness it must have afforded to all those who took part in it. Napoleon's happiness, though, was the greatest of all—so much so that Joseph, who had given up his soldiering and returned to live at home, said that he never in his life saw anything like it.

The boy walked about like a being in a dream, touching familiar objects, gazing at familiar sights, breathing deep the familiar air. Everything was beautiful, wonderful—so that it seemed that Heaven had actually come to this earth.

This feeling was not diminished even by the air of melancholy which dwelt now in the old house. Napoleon must have missed his father, poor gay Charles. He felt sorry, too, to see Grand-uncle Lucien lying bedridden with gout. His mother's sorely reduced income worried him excessively. But all the same he bubbled over with mirth. He put away the French officer and became instead the Corsican boy—the naughty boy of old times.

And he found a playmate who suited his mood exactly in his sister Pauline, then six years of age. To amuse Pauline one day he took a stick and went tapping with it across the floor after the fashion of Grandmamma Fesch who was now grown rheumatic. Alas! there was the stern old woman looking at him.

Grandmamma Fesch was furious. What were French officers to her? She complained to her daughter, adding that the children, in her opinion, had been badly brought up.

Letitia snatched up Pauline and gave her a spanking then and there. She turned to her son; but he ran in mock terror to the door. Even then, he did not know his mother. Later in the day, when he was changing his clothes, the door of his room opened and in walked that formidable woman with a big stick in her hand.

"I am going to thrash you."

And she did—and Napoleon took his thrashing, at the age nearly of eighteen, without a murmur, indeed with pride and wonder. What a mother! He told the story himself at Elba, expressing the view that he had been most justly punished, for "Grandmamma Fesch was very kind and always brought us sweets."

Letitia was undergoing a very severe ordeal. She had no servant and her four younger children, Louis and Pauline, Caroline and Jerome, were aged eight, six, four, and two respectively. She had to work hard from morning till night and was compelled to economize to the very utmost possible extent. Napoleon, seeing this heroism, devoted himself with redoubled energy to his own work. He spent hours locked up in a "study" and made voluminous notes which were to fill the various books he had in mind.

Joseph told, long afterwards, how his brother had brought a trunk with him from France full of the volumes which he had purchased out of his meagre savings—French translations of Plutarch, Plato, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus as well as that Ossian with which history has so often credited him. Moreover:

"He was at that time a passionate admirer of Rousseau."

Curiously enough the little exile had forgotten his mother tongue and had to relearn it not only to read Italian books about Corsica, but also, actually, to talk to his relations and friends.

He took not the slightest interest, at this time, in military matters. Thank God, his days as a French soldier would soon be ended if his hopes of authorship were fulfilled! His reading and writing were all on history and statecraft—the two subjects in which, at that moment, the whole French-speaking world was interested.

He found time, nevertheless, in spite of his eager haste, to send a letter to a Swiss doctor, who had written a book in which he compared Paoli with Cæsar, Mahomet, and Cromwell, congratulating him. The letter proceeded :

" With no other introduction but the esteem I have conceived for your writing, I venture to trouble you to ask your advice for an uncle of mine who suffers from the gout."

This kind thought for Uncle Lucien was not rewarded. The Swiss doctor never replied to the letter.

In August 1787, before his full year of leave was up, Napoleon was recalled, suddenly, to his regiment because an outbreak of war with Prussia was feared. Once more his mother, his grandmothers, and his brothers and sisters —to say nothing of Aunt Gertrude and Caterina and Camilla, all of whom he had visited again and again— bade him good-bye.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE "GLITTERING BEINGS"

Marseilles is about the same distance from Paris as is Aberdeen from London. The young author, as he afterwards indicated, kept his eyes open as he travelled. He was struck now, as perhaps he had not been struck before, with the miserable condition of many of the villages and hamlets through which he passed. No wonder that people all over France were speaking with such terrible bitterness of the contrast presented by the luxury in which the lords and the higher clergy lived and the dreadful, grinding poverty of the twenty odd millions of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen who were not lords or bishops.

His friends the Bous, no doubt, had already told Napoleon something about the ways of lords and bishops in the countryside—to supplement what he knew himself from personal experience of lordlings. The taxes were terrible in their severity ; but no lord paid any taxes and no clergyman paid any taxes. The weight fell almost wholly on the country folk and on the folk in the towns.

That, probably, was why there were so many houses even in the towns without glass in their windows, and that, certainly, was why the country folk lived in hovels and starved, often, in the midst of plenty. Even a year ago the state of France had not interested the young officer. But now the young author realized, without doubt, the bearing of all that he saw on the books which he meant to write—even on the *History of Corsica*. Long afterwards, at a very critical moment of his career, he recalled these very scenes.

Every one, too, everywhere, in the shops, in the streets,

in the stage coaches, was talking politics . . . politics. . . . Every one said that the last straw had been laid on the camel's back and that the common people of France could stand no more. Those who were bold spoke angrily of luxury and waste at the King's palace at Versailles and of the way in which the Queen amused herself without regard to expense. The Queen, said one, had actually driven, in winter, at a time when the poor had no fuel for their fires, in a silver sleigh lined with mother-of-pearl. Those who were in a position to know things, said another, declared that the whole truth about the great Diamond Necklace had not been told. Did anybody believe that the Queen had really refused to allow the King to buy it for her? And, anyhow, the necklace had gone to Versailles. It was terrible that the King and Queen of France should be mixed up in such an affair!

And so on . . . and so on. . . . And when the sins of the Queen had become exhausted as a subject of talk, there were the taxes to speak about and the rights of the lords over ordinary folk. Such a right, for example—so said the gossips—as that known as the "silence of the frogs" which entitled a lord, whose lady was in process of becoming a mother, to compel the villagers to beat the marshes in order to keep the frogs from croaking and so, perhaps, from disturbing the invalid. Of course, nowadays, they added, the "silence of the frogs" was merely an excuse for getting more money. You did not beat the marshes any more; but you paid to avoid the necessity of beating them.

And the game laws! A countryman, it seemed, might not even use a hoe to dig up weeds from among his crops in case he disturbed the young partridges! He might not steep his seed, before planting it, in case the game should get indigestion!

In the towns there was the same fury as in the country—and the same signs of poverty were apparent. The workmen of Lyons were largely unemployed and were, in many cases, being fed by the town.

Napoleon, as he afterwards stated, made some inquiries

about these workmen, whom he saw hanging about the street corners. He was told that they were idle because of the treaty of peace which the King had made with England. The English were allowed now—so the gossips declared—to send their cheap goods into France and so there was no longer a market for the French goods. The factories and workshops consequently were at a standstill.

That explanation, which was being offered all over France as the reason of the prevailing unemployment, made a deep impression on the young officer. Nor is it likely that his keen eyes failed to see what so many others, including that astonishing Englishman, Arthur Young, saw and recorded in the same year.

"The fields," Young wrote under date June 1, 1787, "are scenes of pitiable management as the houses are of misery. Yet all this country is highly improvable, if they knew what to do with it; the property, perhaps, of some of those glittering beings at Versailles. Heaven grant me patience while I see a country thus neglected—and forgive me the oaths I swear at the absence and ignorance of the possessors."

The good Suffolk squire knew what he was talking about, and nothing horrified him more than the utter lack of interest in their land shown by the "Glittering Beings" —the lords—whom he had seen on a visit to Versailles.

Napoleon also went to Versailles in the year 1787—for the rumour of war with Prussia was a false alarm and he was told, when he got back to his regiment, that he might continue his leave for a time. So he bethought himself of his mother's plea that he might try to get payment for her for the mulberry plantation which, at the request of the French, his father had planted in the last years of his life.

He took a lodging in Paris. Not before had he been free in the great city—for the pupils at the Military Academy were kept under strict control. He was still, for all his military training, the gaping sightseer, and, moreover—one is apt to forget it—he was but eighteen years of age.

The town was fermenting like a great wine vat;

excitement was in the air; the thrill of an uncharted future brightened every eye. Something certainly was going to happen, and that something—so Paris thought then—would be beautiful and simple like Nature . . . like France herself.

Perhaps alone of all the people with whom he rubbed shoulders in the Paris streets, at the Café Royal of an evening, in the Rue St. Honoré, on the quays, on the bridges—the Corsican lad was able to read the meaning of this strange exultation. For had he not, already, in the streets of Ajaccio, beheld this very uplifting of hope as men looked out across the sea from whence should come the ships of England and Paoli? And had he not seen in Ajaccio the flash of hate, like naked steel, in the eyes of those same men, when they turned them from the sea to the Citadel? When Paris turned her gaze on Versailles, on the palace of King Louis, her gentleness was frozen. The patriotism of Paris knew not the glory of Versailles, nor the people of Paris the "Glittering Beings" who moved in that remote world.

Napoleon went out to Versailles with his mind filled with the excitement of Paris; but apparently the scenes which he had witnessed on the long way across France from Marseilles also haunted his thoughts.

And there, now, was the palace itself, that palace of the "Great King," Louis XIV, which had served, as he knew, as the model for the palaces of all the Kings of Europe. There, in the centre of the mighty *Place*, was the statue of Louis XIV himself mounted on his charger—that Louis who had likened himself to the Sun, and whom all nations had joined to glorify.

*Under this horse's hoofs Europe had been trampled.*

The boy's eyes saw, perhaps, gathered round their master, his soldiers and his statesmen—for the statues which stand now in the *Place* were not there then—Colbert, the father of the French Navy, Turenne, the great Condé.

I confess that I have lingered to picture Napoleon standing beside that statue of the greatest King France ever possessed. At Brienne, of course, they had taught him

about this glory of Louis XIV, of which, as a French officer, he should one day become an inheritor. But here, to see and to handle, was the reality, Glory herself revealed.

The boy turned away. He mingled with the throng which crowded every apartment—the throng in which his poor father had loved to mingle—elbowing his way, perhaps, by the Gallery of Apollo to the cabinet of Lord Brienne, King Louis' Prime Minister, with whom he had managed to secure an appointment.

He was admitted. The statesman stood before him. Napoleon plunged at once into the question of the mulberry plantation, and the question of Lucien's school fees.

He was invited to put his petition into writing.

The door of the cabinet closed behind him. A thousand other suitors clamoured for audience. He walked through the great apartments, gazing, no doubt, at the " Glittering Beings " who thronged and crowded everywhere—the lords of King Louis, the ancient nobility of France whom but five years separated now from the steps of the guillotine. It is just possible that he may have seen the King and Queen —but there is no record of that. Arthur Young, on his visit to Versailles, four months before, noted that " the whole place except the chapel seems to be open to all the world ; we pushed through an amazing crowd of all sorts of people." The " Glittering Beings " and the commoner sort of mortals had always rubbed shoulders in this palace in which, when the Queen of France was brought to bed with her eldest child, fishwives crowded the lying-in room, so that the King himself had to fight his way to his wife's side.

I have wondered, often, what Napoleon thought of it all, for there is no record of his thoughts. Perhaps he was too much absorbed in the immediate business of the mulberry trees to give his whole attention to the scene. He failed, alas ! to get the money which was owing to his mother and he failed also to get Lucien's school fees—and this from the man, Lord Brienne, whom all Paris accused at that time of " feathering his own nest " at the expense of the nation. In spite of the thrill of the statue of the

Great King, the Corsican lad must have left the palace with a deep sense of injustice in his heart. His mother had based such high hopes on this money!

When he got back to Paris he wrote a curious essay on the subject of love of glory contrasted with love of country. In that essay, which still exists, he poured scathing contempt on the ambition of the great generals of Louis XIV and contrasted this impulse with the pure lustre of a patriot's emotion.

Paris believed that the Queen was the evil genius of the King and that it was she who was the chief author of all the miseries which national bankruptcy was producing. Poor Marie Antoinette and her gay Court were reviled on every side. Napoleon, whose eyes had just feasted on the loveliness as well as the glitter of Versailles, on the wondrous girls of that world of fair women, seems to have shared the Parisian disapproval of it. His essay at any rate suggests that he was shocked:

"But thou, who to-day dost chain to thy chariot the hearts of men, Sex, whose whole merit consists in its brilliant exterior, . . . blush at what thou art not. It is in thine annals that I shall find the greatest proof of the insufficient power of glory."

This is Letitia's son speaking—the son of the Spartan mother who had fought side by side with her husband for the freedom of their native land; and this is also the voice of the eater of soldiers' bread. That day spent at Versailles, at the Court of the "Queen of Love and Beauty," the most chivalrous Court of Christendom, assuredly left its indelible mark.

More than ever, now, was Napoleon determined that in no circumstances would he model his conduct on that of the world's reputed gentlemen. And as for its "ladies":

"'Those Spartan women,' says Plutarch," he wrote, "(whose sons and husbands had died for their country) 'triumphed in temples and public places, while the mothers and wives of those who had escaped alive did not dare to show themselves! Yes! customs worthy of a Nation.'"

Napoleon has left a record of another woman whom he met in Paris on November 22. Here it is, in his own words:

"I had just left the Italian Opera and was facing the walks of the Palais Royal. I had reached the iron gates when my eyes fell on a woman. The time of day, her appearance, her youth, all showed clearly enough what she was. I stared at her; she stopped. Her hesitation encouraged me and I spoke to her. . . . I spoke to her, I, who so loathe her vile trade, I, who have always felt myself contaminated by a single glance!

"'You will be cold,' I said. 'How can you go out there?'

"'Oh, Monsieur, hope keeps me warm. I must finish my evening.'

"The indifference with which she spoke, the calmness of her reply, aroused my interest, and I turned back with her.

"'You don't look very strong; I am surprised that you can stand doing what you do.'

"'Well, Monsieur, one must do something for one's living.'

"'That may be, but surely you could find some employment suited to your health.'

"'No, Monsieur; I must earn money.'"

## CHAPTER XVI

### A FALSE POSITION

With these exciting ideas glowing in his brain, the lad returned once more to his dear Ajaccio. Alas! it was not even the Ajaccio which he had left four months earlier. Real poverty dwelt now in his home.

Napoleon experienced a sense of dismay. His mother was overworked, tired, and with scarcely any money, and she had injured her hand. She was struggling to pay the school fees of Lucien at Aix and she had actually, in addition, been sending sums to Joseph who had, for a time, taken up the study of law in Pisa—just as his father had done before him. Only the faithful Caterina remained to give Letitia help.

Napoleon brought no good news. He had failed to get any money for the plantation. He insisted that Joseph must be told the truth at once. His mother wrote to her eldest son at Pisa :

" We are without a servant, so do what is possible to bring one back with you. I would like a woman who is not too young . . . she should do our washing, but, if she will not, it does not matter. But she must do our little cooking and be able to sew and iron and be faithful. That is what I want, because, since my finger trouble, I am not in a condition to do one single thing further. Try and do your best."

Napoleon at any rate did his best and set about trying to pull things together. For, though he was called by his brothers and sisters at this time, " the citizen of the ideal world," he could be intensely practical. He devoted himself to the care of the mulberry plantation, to the

re-establishment of a salt work in which the family was interested, to the restoring of their small country house, and to other matters, and, as was said at the time, soon gave the impression that he "was everything and was everywhere."

But in all this work he had not forgotten his reason for returning home—the forthcoming meeting of the Corsican Parliament ("the Estates"); and so he heard with bitter mortification that the French Commander-in-Chief in the island, de Barrin, was trying to postpone this meeting. Here, indeed, was tyranny—the very spirit, as he thought, of Versailles, of those "Glittering Beings" who cared for nothing but their own interests. Napoleon travelled at once to Bastia, the French capital of Corsica, where he knew that there was, in garrison, a company of gunners of his own regiment. He went to call on the officers and was, according to regimental custom, invited to dinner. He used the opportunity thus afforded him, in his capacity as a French officer, to enter a vigorous protest against the postponement of the Corsican Parliament, and even declared:

"It is very surprising that M. de Barrin should wish to prevent the Corsicans from discussing their own interests."

This statement caused the officers of King Louis to open their eyes wide. For the speaker must surely realize that his criticisms would be likely to reach the ears of the Commander-in-Chief himself. Napoleon did realize that of course; probably that was his sole object in making these criticisms. At any rate he added, "in a threatening tone":

"M. de Barrin does not know the Corsicans; he will learn of what they are capable."

"Mon Dieu," cried one of the Frenchmen in horror, "would you, a French officer, draw your sword against the representative of the King?"

The question confounded Napoleon. He soon left the mess, and he went in a cold silence. Talk such as his

was new and eminently distasteful to the gentlemen of France whose minds were not, like his mind, full of the surging ideas of a future still in the womb. What, anyhow, could it matter whether these absurd islanders held their Parliament or not ?

But it mattered to Napoleon that he stood, still, in a false position.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE LIGHT IN THE WINDOW

And so, when he got back to his regiment in the middle of 1788, he was resolved to set to work with desperation to achieve authorship.

His regiment was now stationed at Auxonne, a little walled town and a dull place surrounded by the marshes of the River Saône, which flows southward to the Rhône. This was unfortunate, because Napoleon had suffered severely while in Corsica from fever—probably Malta fever—and was very unwell. His face had become terribly pinched and sallow and he was subject to fits of severe exhaustion. But the eater of soldiers' bread was not daunted. He planned out his life so as to get the maximum time for study without neglecting his military duties.

He took a room in the house of the Professor of Mathematics whose class he was attending as part of his training. His midday meal was now given up in order to save expense and he contented himself with a single meal in the twenty-four hours. He took this in a café opposite his lodging at three o'clock every afternoon. The moment it was over he rushed back to his studies and worked right on till ten o'clock at night, when he went to bed. He slept only till four a.m.—that is to say, for six hours—when he rose and again began his writing until it was time to go on parade.

I like to think of that writing. I like to think of the shabby Auxonne street, in the dead of night, with its solitary lighted window; of the candle guttering on the table; of the thin, beautiful boyish face with its big grey

eyes and its clear, swift features; of the quill driven remorselessly from sheet to sheet by that delicate, carefully manicured hand. And I like to think that, when the dawn came marching bravely across the world, the young Napoleon put his writing away and threw open his window that he might behold the bestowal, eternally renewed, of hope and light upon the world.

Nor was he idle as a soldier. He was chosen, because he was the best mathematician in the regiment, to superintend some important gunnery experiments. He himself described that duty in a letter to his uncle, young Fesch, as: "this unheard-of mark of favour," and said that it had made some officers, senior to him in rank, show some jealousy. He added: "What troubles me most is my health, which does not seem to me very good."

His health, as has been said, was not good. He was afflicted with Malta fever and had not been properly treated for it. So that he kept on suffering from slight relapses and from those periods of low temperature which cause such intense depression. He lived chiefly on milk, which formed the main part of his daily meal.

Nevertheless he managed to struggle on, writing and reading all night and carrying on his gunnery experiments all day, in defiance of the feverish attacks and the faint attacks which vexed him by turns.

"I felt," he said long afterwards, "that I had not a moment to lose."

That was not, of course, a prophecy but merely a plain statement of the fact. It was the *History of Corsica* or utter failure—a life of happiness or a life spent in kissing the hands which oppressed. His brother officers were under no such burden. One of them spoke later of "that miserable residence at Auxonne where we did not know what to be at or how to pass our time."

The hands that oppressed, though, were growing strangely weak. The passionate student, in his midnight attic, realized, day by day, that the anger of the millions of Frenchmen, who toiled and spun for them, and suffered at their hands, was rising against the King and Queen of

France and the "Glittering Beings." France had turned glaring eyes on Versailles, snarling under her breath as she glared. And because of those glaring eyes, because the King's money was spent, and because the price of bread was so fearfully high, the King had been compelled to agree to call his Parliament together.

That was a tremendous victory for the glaring eyes, for there had been no Parliament called in the same fashion for more than a century. France held her breath.

And meanwhile the price of bread went soaring up and some got rich while millions starved. What was the reason of this terrible scarcity? There were rumours and counter-rumours, stories, too, of violence and horror, threats of more violence and more horror to come. One day Napoleon received an order to proceed at once to a neighbouring village where two merchants, who had been suspected of being hoarders of wheat, had been murdered by a mob of the inhabitants. On April 2, 1789, the young Lieutenant reached the village. But the trouble had died down and the villagers were quiet. King Mob had ceased, for the moment, to reign.

But only for the moment. The meaning of the scowls of hatred which the peasants cast at the King's uniform was not to be mistaken. These wretched folk had yielded only to superior force. Moreover a savage jubilation was in their looks. Had the King not been forced to call together to his palace the Parliament of France? And would not the Parliament of France compel the King to obtain cheaper bread for his people and relief from the salt tax and perhaps from all the other taxes? *It was only a question of time now . . . only a question of a little time. . . .*

Napoleon, as he watched these people, had his own ears strained to catch the faintest echo of the struggle at that very moment going on in Marseilles, only two hundred miles away, between the Count Mirabeau and the Lords of the South. Napoleon already knew something of his Mirabeau, for one, at least, of the "naughty boy of the French nobility's" books stood on his shelves. He knew

that Mirabeau had formerly had to fly out of France because of his bold tongue and his still bolder pen; but the fellow was not to be kept away, not even though the King and the lords and bishops desired to tear him limb from limb. He had come back to stand as a candidate for the King's new Parliament.

The people of the South had gone mad for Mirabeau. The news had come through to Auxonne that, when Mirabeau entered Marseilles for the first time, every house was draped in flags, and there were flags flying on every ship in the harbour. Three hundred vehicles followed Mirabeau's carriage into Marseilles, and his carriage was heaped high with flowers and palm leaves—and this at a moment when, because of the ruinous price of bread, Marseilles was starving. This man—this Mirabeau—was already the people's champion against the King; he was, men said, the strong arm which should save France from Versailles, from the "Glittering Beings" and the greedy Churchmen who were feeding like wolves on her despair.

"Men, women, and children," wrote Mirabeau from Marseilles, "watered my hands, feet, and clothes with tears and called me their God and their salvation."

A week after Napoleon and his gunners arrived at the riotous village, the news was received that Mirabeau had been elected to the King's Parliament. *The Man of the People, then, was going to Versailles to meet King Louis face to face.*

That thought dwelt now in every mind. Even the young Lieutenant had difficulty in restraining himself, and when, early in May, he returned to Auxonne and to his *History of Corsica*, his enthusiasm for that history was a little divided. Would Mirabeau succeed, or would Mirabeau fail, in his tremendous task of setting the French people free of their tyrants? Here, at any rate, thought Napoleon, was a man who had refused to kiss the hands which oppressed—a man worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as Paoli.

Napoleon's light still burned in the dingy window of

the Professor's house. He bent, still, over his book, which was to bring him to independence and secure his mother in comfort. But sometimes his eyes strayed from the task and grew deep and thoughtful.

He wrote about this time :

" This year has begun hopefully for right-thinkers, and after all these centuries of feudal barbarism and political slavery it is surprising to see how the word *Liberty* sets minds on fire that appeared to be demoralized under the influence of luxury, indulgence, and art. While France is being regenerated, what will become of us unfortunate Corsicans ?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### KING MOB

We have the word of Arthur Young—and it is worth having—that in the tremendous days of May, June, and July 1789, when the throne of France was, literally, tumbling down, the country districts of France lived almost without news of what was happening. News, indeed, came only in odd letters or by chance travellers.

Auxonne, that little walled-town on the Saône River, three hundred miles from Paris, must have had its news very late indeed; but no doubt the King's officers got information sooner than other folk. By the middle of May, perhaps, Napoleon may have heard of the events passing at Versailles at the beginning of that month.

They were events calculated to thrill the heart of the young Corsican. On Monday, May 4, in lovely sunshine, the three Estates of France, as they were called, the Clergy, the Lords, and the Commons, had met together in Parliament at Versailles. Such descriptions of that "baptism day of democracy" as he received must have sent the lad's mind scouting into the uncharted future: the great procession from the Church of Nôtre Dame in Versailles to the Church of St. Louis to hear Mass; the 600 Commons, all in black except for their cravats, and wearing knee breeches and silk stockings; the Lords in their robes with the jewels of their orders blazing insolently in the spring sunshine; the Clergy in their vestments of scarlet and crimson, black and white and grey; and then King Louis himself and his Queen.

Napoleon may have noticed, specially, the fact that the new Prime Minister, Necker, was with the King—because Necker, the Swiss banker, had recently taken the place of that Lord Brienne on whom he had called to ask payment for his mother's mulberry plantation. People said that Necker was the only man who could prevent France from going bankrupt, and the banker's name was already nearly as popular as that of Mirabeau himself.

After these early reports there came others of a different kind: reports that the King was trying to get rid of the Parliament which he had called together. The Clergy and the Lords, too, it was said, had refused to sit in the same hall with the Commons.

This last bit of news, when it became generally known, turned the glaring eyes of France bloodshot; but the glaring eyes of France were mostly in Paris. It is doubtful if Auxonne heard much for many a day. The King's officers, however, certainly did hear, within a week or two, that the Commons had defied the Clergy and the Lords and had named themselves the National Assembly—that is to say, the Parliament of the Nation. They had taken this step, it was reported, on the prompting of the Abbé Sieyès, a priest whom Mirabeau, that prince of nicknamers, had already christened "Mahomet."

Can Napoleon, who knew intimately the history of King Charles I of England, have had any doubt what a step of that kind meant? Probably, though, he thought that King Louis would soon teach these obstreperous Commons of his to mind their own business. With what sheer amazement, then, he must have learned that King Louis' only way of asserting his Kingship had been to lock the Commons out of their meeting-hall!

The Commons, though, had not been content to walk the streets. On the contrary, they had taken the advice of one of their own number, a certain Dr. Guillotin (an inventor, as the world was soon to discover, as well as a doctor), and had marched away to the King's covered tennis court; and there they had sworn a solemn oath, every man

holding up his right hand, never to separate until a new law and a new freedom had been given to France.

Surely now, Napoleon must have thought, King Louis would take some strong action! Because this "Oath of the Tennis Court" was a direct challenge to himself, to his crown, and to his throne. But no. All that King Louis had done, apparently, was to lock up the tennis court also and to post sentries round the door. Once again the Commons had been turned into the street.

What a farce! But there was worse to come. King Louis, after that, had called up some regiments of soldiers to protect him and had then summoned a fresh meeting of his three Estates. When the 600 Commons appeared in answer to that summons, they had actually been kept standing outside the hall, in the rain, till their clothes were soaked through. When, at last, they did receive permission to enter, the Clergy and the Lords, who were already comfortably seated, jeered and laughed at them. And then, to complete their humiliation, the King himself had arrived, to the sound of drums and trumpets, and had ordered them to go to a hall of their own.

But when the King had departed, and officers began to insist that the Commons should obey his orders, Mirabeau, the idol of Marseilles, Mirabeau, the man of France, jumped to his feet, and his great height towered over all the others, and his great, ugly, splendid face, so full of human sympathy, so full of humour, glowed with defiance, and his great voice, like the voice of a lion, rang to the very rafters.

"Go and tell your master," he cried to the King's officers, "that we are here by the will of the People and will only be torn from our places by the force of bayonets."

On July 18 a riot broke out in Auxonne itself. The mob rushed to the office of the local tax-gatherer and soon broke into it. They tore the place to bits, flinging furniture and fittings into the road. Greedy hands seized on everything of value and carried everything of value away.

Napoleon's regiment was ordered to quell the mob;

but, when the officers gave their commands, the men did not obey them. These soldiers, up till now so obedient, refused to move a step against the rioters. They actually stood looking on and approving of what was being done.

Napoleon had never seen anything like that before. He looked at that furious mob, that gang of violent men, that howling, shrieking, starving rabble, and shuddered in spite of himself. He knew that most of these wretches had been driven by oppressions and cruelties, by the swift lash of contempt and the slow chastisement of despair, along the course they were now pursuing. But he knew, also, that that course could lead nowhere except to ruin.

And so he laboured with his brother officers to persuade the soldiers that they should obey orders and help to put a stop to the riot. It took two days to get the soldiers to listen to reason, and meanwhile the mob had forced the keepers of the King's salt store in the town to sell salt to them at threepence a pound—that is to say, free of tax.

The riot of Auxonne was quelled on July 21 and peace was restored to the town. The townsfolk felt, probably with some pride, that Auxonne had now played its part in the great events then occurring. They certainly felt, and believed firmly, that their action had brought to nothing the wicked designs of the Queen of France against their town. The French Revolution is all amazing; but there is nothing in its history more amazing than the idea, which possessed each village and each hamlet in France, that poor Marie Antoinette was specially plotting the destruction of that particular village and that particular hamlet. We have the reliable testimony of our good Suffolk squire, Arthur Young, on this point.

Strangely enough, on July 30, nine days after the riot was quelled by Napoleon's regiment, Arthur Young came himself to Auxonne. But, as he says:

"To avoid the sentinels" (he had no passport) "I went round the town. The country to Auxonne is cheerful. Cross the Saône at Auxonne; it is a fine river, through a region of flat meadow of beautiful verdure; commons of

great herds of cattle; vastly flooded and the haycocks under water."

A little earlier in his book Arthur Young tells how a Frenchman to whom he spoke on July 14 said to him: "France may have a Cromwell in its bosom as well as England."

I think that if this excellent English squire could have read the future he would not, on July 30, have "gone round the town" of Auxonne in which, at that moment perhaps, the "French Cromwell" was drinking his milk in the small café opposite the Professor's house.

No sooner was the riot in Auxonne quelled than amazing news began to reach the town from Paris. King Louis, it seemed, had actually, after having given way completely on the question whether the Commons should sit in the same hall with the Clergy and the Lords, allowed the Queen to persuade him to make a second attempt to bring these troublesome Commons to heel. And the way he had chosen to bring the Commons to heel was to dismiss from his service, and from his palace, the banker Necker, that smug Solomon who had become, Heaven knows why, the special darling of Paris. The dismissal of Necker was taken to mean that the King was not going to cut down expenses and was not going to allow any one to dictate to him.

Paris, said the reports, howled with rage. In every corner of the city frantic men yelled out the news that King Louis, when he called his Parliament to meet him, had merely been playing a game of bluff. King Louis had no intention of listening to anybody except the Queen, and everybody knew what that meant. It meant more waste at Versailles and more starvation in Paris; it meant more taxes; it meant that more prisoners would be hurried off to the King's horrible dungeons. Very soon, probably, all the 600 Commons would be flung into prison because they had dared to suggest that the Queen was too extravagant. The Bastille would soon be full to overflowing. . . .

*The Bastille!* That name of dread had chilled, for a moment, the wild audiences who heard it, because every Parisian knew the black, dreadful walls and towers of the great prison-house which, standing in the very centre of Paris, seemed to threaten the whole city. But the chill had given place, very soon, to a sense of desperation. The eyes of Paris began to flash. From ten thousand throats, suddenly, the cry broke forth, raging like a mountain torrent:

"*To the Bastille!*"

The Bastille, this amazing news continued, was actually taken by the Parisian mob, taken and torn down, stone from stone, rent asunder and utterly destroyed.

That had happened on July 14. On the same night the news of the destruction of the Bastille was brought to Versailles. Somebody entered King Louis' bedroom and woke him.

King Louis got up and dressed. He was told then that his Parliament had not yet gone to bed. It was still sitting, Clergy and Lords and Commons, in its hall, discussing the tremendous event. When the King entered the Parliament Hall, in the dead of night, he was received in silence. He had promised, there and then, to bring Necker back, to listen to the advice of his Parliament, to cut down expenses . . . everything . . . anything. . . .

And next day the King drove in his coach to Paris. He visited the town hall of the city. He appeared on the balcony of the town hall wearing, instead of his own white cockade, the new cockade—red, white, and blue—of the Revolution. Paris, when it saw the red, white, and blue cockade in the King's hat, knew that it had won the first round of its fight with Versailles. When the King got back to his palace again, he was no longer King in the old sense. It was the 600 Commons, now, who really ruled France.

And to show that they really ruled France, the Commons commanded that every officer of the King's Army should swear a new oath:

"To remain faithful to the Nation, the King, and the

Law and never to employ those under our orders against the citizens unless we are required to do so by the civil or municipal officers."

Napoleon and all his brother officers took this new oath on August 23, six weeks after the day on which King Louis had worn the red, white, and blue cockade. On August 23, therefore, Napoleon ceased to be an officer only of the King of France. He became, also, an officer of the French Nation—*first, of the Nation, and second, of the King.*

His heart thrilled at the change, because he had no grievance against the French Nation. It was the King, not the Nation, who had conquered Corsica.

But that joyful feeling did not last very long. King Mob was still showing his ugly teeth in Auxonne. No sooner had their officers taken the new oath than the soldiers of Napoleon's regiment began to give trouble. Why, they asked, should they obey orders any longer seeing that they were themselves part of the French Nation? They marched in a body to the Colonel's house and demanded the money kept in the regimental cash-box. The Colonel, who seems to have been terrified, gave them the money. Promptly the whole regiment got drunk and forced those of their officers whom they happened to meet to drink and dance with them.

There is no record that Napoleon was one of the officers they happened to meet. I feel convinced, personally, that he took care to avoid any such meeting. For he declared, afterwards, that if he had received an order to fire on the drunken, shameless brawlers he would not have hesitated to do so.

Even King Louis, in Napoleon's opinion, was better than King Mob.

For this reason he approved heartily of the efforts now being made in most of the towns and villages to set up a "Town Guard"—a body of armed citizens—charged with the police duty of maintaining order and punishing rioters and thieves.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LONG LIVÉ MIRABEAU!

NAPOLEON knew now that the first use the majority of people made of freedom was to get drunk and hit each other over the head, or to break windows and doors and steal other people's goods. The majority of people, in other words, were not fit to be free. The very best thing that could happen to them was a wise rulership.

The period of annual leave had come round again and, because comparative peace had been restored to the town of Auxonne and to the regiment, this was not withheld. On September 15, 1789, therefore, at the age of twenty, Napoleon set out once more for Corsica. He travelled this time through a sorely troubled land and must, on his way, have heard many a strange and terrible story of what was afoot all over France. The name of Mirabeau was now on every lip and every lip blessed that name. Mirabeau was the father of French liberty, and because this was so the past—that lurid, raging, tearing, wild past of one of the strangest of human beings—was forgiven and forgotten. If only King Louis would be wise enough to listen to the voice of the man whom God had raised up to advise him!

Many simple people spoke in that fashion; for the Revolution, as yet, was only in its cradle. It had not yet begun to cut its teeth. When he reached Marseilles, Napoleon paid a second visit to the Abbé Raynal. Before he left the scholar the young officer handed him the completed manuscript of his *History of Corsica*. Raynal said that he would read it and hinted that he might, perhaps, send it to Mirabeau, who was his friend, after he had read it.

That idea must have sent Napoleon away literally dancing on air. To think that his book should come to the hands of the great Mirabeau!

But if the troubles of France filled the young man's mind they did not banish from that mind the troubles of his own people. He was greatly worried about his mother; he was worried, too, to know how Corsica was going to fare in these troubled days. He reached his home at the end of September. The whole family was now at home except Eliza, who remained at the school at St. Cyr. Joseph was practising as a barrister, thus turning his degree as Doctor of Laws to good use; Lucien, whose school fees at Aix had proved too heavy for poor Letitia, had returned home and was, at the age of fourteen and a half, doing nothing but lounge about. Louis was eleven; Pauline nine; Caroline seven; and Jerome five. Uncle Lucien was now completely bedridden. The burden of everything, as Napoleon soon saw, fell on the shoulders of his mother. He felt thankful that he would be able, in some measure, to lighten that burden for her. The thought that his first book was actually finished and in such good hands must have been specially cheering to him.

Not less cheering was the news that Joseph had become secretary of a patriotic committee, which had recently been formed in Ajaccio. The members of this committee shared all the ideas about liberty of which, at Versailles, Mirabeau was the great mouthpiece. But whereas Mirabeau spoke for France, Joseph and his friends spoke for Corsica—not actually against the French, but against the King of France.

This distinction between the French and the King of France was becoming more important every day. Because the French people—the Commons—had begun to pay great respect to Corsica and to speak in glowing language about the fight which Corsicans had made for their freedom, whereas the King of France still kept his soldiers and his Governors in the island and still punished severely any Corsicans who dared to disobey him. Those miserable

wretches—in Napoleon's view—who were ready to kiss the hands which oppressed them, supported the King of France; but the strong spirits sympathized with the six hundred brave Commoners who, at Versailles, had triumphed over the King and looked forward to the day when they too, in their own way, would be able to win a similar victory.

These strong spirits were keeping in close touch with the members of King Louis' Parliament who represented the common people of Corsica and who were now, of course, at Versailles—Saliceti and Cesari, both of them Mirabeau's men, for the Revolution against the King. After the destruction of the Bastille, when King Louis had been forced to put the red, white, and blue cockade in his hat, Cesari had sent a letter to Corsica, to the Corsican Parliament, in which he said that a new committee of Corsicans should at once be formed and a regiment of Corsican militia called into being. This proposal created a great stir; but the twelve noblemen of the island, those noblemen among whom poor Charles had been so proud to sit, and whose rank had come to them from King Louis, poured cold water on it. Let us be content, they said, and not try any wild experiments.

That was the very language to rouse Napoleon and his friends to fury. Who, they asked, are these twelve "noblemen" who are so anxious to please the King of France? They are the men who, for twenty years, have been kissing the hands which oppressed them; the men who have sold their honour to the French King and taken favours for betraying their country. Napoleon and his friends resolved, there and then, to send a message of their own to Mirabeau and the 600 Commons of France. It was agreed that Napoleon should write the message.

Here, indeed, was an honour . . . the means, at last, of washing out the stain of Charles's blue blood and Charles's disgraceful courting of King Louis. The son of the man who had glowed with pride to be called by France a Corsican nobleman glowed with a nobler pride to tell the French people that Corsican noblemen knew

and cared nothing about the feelings of their countrymen. He glowed again when representatives of the Commons of Corsica—members of a National Guard which had been formed—were sent off to Paris to tell the Commons of France that Corsica was following the example which France had set her, and to ask the French Parliament to allow the Corsican people to ally itself to the people of France, freely, of its own will.

Great was the joy of Napoleon and his friends when they saw these messengers of theirs sail away from Corsica. For nobody doubted that the French Revolution would welcome the friendship of Corsica and everybody glowed to think that the leaders of the French Revolution were the sincere admirers of their beloved island. It was freedom calling to freedom; one Revolution embracing another.

The messengers reached Paris on November 24, 1789. But it was not the Paris of the old days to which they came. It was a new Paris, strange, quick, full of deep excitement and wild imaginings. Tremendous events had taken place during the last month.

These events, like so many of the greatest events of the Revolution, had had their beginning in the folly of Queen Marie Antoinette. On October 1, the King's Life Guards at Versailles had given a great banquet to the officers of the Flanders Regiment which the King had ordered to come to his palace. When the banquet began all the officers wore the new cockade of the Revolution, the red, white, and blue, which the King himself had worn for the first time when he went to Paris on the day after the destruction of the Bastille. The red, white, and blue cockade was the emblem of the French people, of their freedom and their hope, just as the white cockade had been the emblem of the King, of Versailles, and of the people's slavery.

As the banquet proceeded the officers of the Life Guards began to grow bolder and bolder and the good wine they drank made them bolder still. Some of them tore off the red, white, and blue cockades from their uniforms. Then

the doors of the banqueting-hall were thrown open and the Queen entered the hall, followed by her women. These lovely girls carried bunches of white cockades.

In an instant all the young lords sprang to their feet. They tore off the cockades of the Revolution and hurled them to the floor. They stamped on them, while pretty fingers pinned on their breasts the white ribands of Versailles. That song of loyalty :

"Oh, Richard, Oh, my King,"

broke vehemently from every lip.

Marie Antoinette flushed with joy and pride and, for the last time in all her gay, brave life, a smile of happiness transformed her beautiful face. In that moment of wonder the Revolution and the Parliament and Mirabeau and the glaring, bloodshot eyes of famished France seemed to vanish away. It was again the old world of splendour and of chivalry.

And then the sun of Royalty sank for ever. Next morning the rage of Paris, echoing like thunder, drove the blood from the gayest cheeks. Lords who had lingered, hoping against hope, in their ancient strongholds, began to hurry to the frontiers. Three days later that dreadful procession of the fishwives and abandoned women of Paris, came surging out, in the night time and the rain, to Versailles shouting and shrieking for

"*Bread! Bread! Bread! Bread!*"

till the ears of King and Queen and Courtiers grew deaf and their hearts were turned to ice.

The women camped all night in the great square before the palace, under the feet of the charger of the Great King—that statue on which Napoleon's grey eyes had so recently been set in wide-open wonder. They polluted the sacred place of Kings ; they filled the dripping darkness with their obscene laughter :

"*Bread! Bread! Bread! Bread!*"

And when the soldiers came to protect the King, led by that half-sage, half-fool of a Lafayette, "the man of

America," the women renewed their glee and their shouting and fuming and brawling.

"Oh, the dear soldiers who would not harm a sweetheart! Oh, the dear King who loves his people! *Bread! Bread! Bread! Bread!*"

Heaven knows how that night passed, the last night of Versailles, of the old world, of the romance of chivalry. The first night of desolation and horror, aye, and of hope also.

The muddy, fœtid waters lapped about the throne. The city of the Great King gave her inviolate body to her ravishers.

On the next day the fishwives and the prostitutes, rabble most foul, the cut-throats and assassins, the thieves and vagabonds dared to attack the palace of the King. The Life Guards offered resistance; two of them were massacred; the human scum entered the palace and mounted the stairs, up and up, to the very ante-room of Royalty. King and Queen fled through the great galleries, the Gallery of Apollo, that scene of all the glories of Kingship, to the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, the ante-chamber of the Great King.

And murder followed them.

Then the King promised—not from cowardice, for he was always brave—to go to Paris to live among these his loving people. . . . And then Lafayette, great for once, led the King and Queen on to the balcony and kissed the Queen's hand before all the rabble.

And so Versailles came to its darkness and was extinguished. And the fishwives and the prostitutes, shouting their dreadful challenge of

"*Bread! Bread! Bread! Bread!*"

with the soldiers, made an escort for King Louis and his Queen on their last journey from Versailles to Paris.

On November 24, the Corsican messengers of Napoleon and his friends found the King and his Queen installed in the palace of the Tuileries, prisoners, in all but the name, in the heart of their capital. They found, too, the

King's Parliament—now become the King's master, almost his jailer—sitting in Paris instead of in Versailles.

On November 30, a letter, addressed by the messengers from Corsica, was read to the Parliament. That letter urged that Corsica should be made a part of France. The reading was received with tremendous enthusiasm, and the great Mirabeau himself sprang to his feet and declared that it had been one of his deep regrets that he had "soiled his youth" by volunteering to help, as a soldier, in the conquest of Corsica. His speech was followed by many others—all full of the warmest praises of Corsica and of "Paoli, the patriot."

"Corsica," cried speaker after speaker, "is the home of freedom, the native land of patriots, the true republic."

When the speeches were over the Parliament got to business. The request of the messengers was instantly granted and the plan, which Napoleon and his friends had suggested, was, there and then, adopted. Corsica was declared a part of France—not a conquered country, but part of the "sacred soil," one of the family with equal position and equal rights. Then Mirabeau rose again, and in a great, ringing speech asked that those Corsicans who had fought for their liberty against the King of France and been driven, as a result, from their native land, should now be allowed to return home to enjoy their new rights as French citizens.

These men, he said, fought for liberty, just as we are now fighting for liberty.

Everybody knew the name which was in Mirabeau's mind as he spoke. It was Paoli on whose behalf the patriot of France was pleading. A great cry went up from the Commons that the Corsican patriot, all the Corsican patriots, all of Paoli's men, should be allowed to return home. It was in vain that a few lords protested that such an action would cause great trouble in Corsica and was, in any case, an insult to the memory of King Louis XV who had conquered the island.

The good news was brought by swift couriers to Corsica and every patriot in the island thrilled with the joy of it.

Napoleon was home again, now, with his family at Ajaccio. He helped to make a flag which was soon flying from the Bonaparte house. The flag bore on it the words :

"Long live the Nation! Long live Paoli! Long live Mirabeau!"

When night came a huge bonfire was lighted and the crowd gathered round it and blessed the French people who had welcomed Corsica to their hearts and who had done such great honour to the name of Paoli. Napoleon and his friends were transported and intoxicated with joy. Again, once again, Corsica was free. The dark years of oppression had been rolled away ; bright years of liberty lay before them. Nor was it likely that liberty could ever, in the future, be lost, because Corsica, though free, did not now stand alone and unprotected as in the past. Corsica and France stood side by side ; and the mighty power of the French people was ready to save Corsica from any enemy who might come against her. Paoli's young men had been worthy of their master.

Those young men, now, gave themselves up to radiant thoughts of the home-coming of their beloved chief. How Paoli would approve of what they had done ; how he would rejoice in what they had done ; and how they would rejoice in his rejoicing! How the free men of England too, who had been so kind to their hero, would rejoice with him and them!

That night of the coming of the good news from Paris, Napoleon and his mother must have felt their hearts burn with special pride and thanksgiving. I like to think that Letitia stood beside her son, the French officer, at the great bonfire, and watched the play of expression on his face as he heard the crowd about him shouting, "Long live France!" No longer was the boy's uniform a source of shame and regret to him or to her. It had become, this night, the uniform, not of oppression, but of freedom ; not of the King of France, but of the French and the Corsican peoples. In this hour, for the first time, Napoleon's mother was proud to call herself a French-woman as well as a woman of Corsica.

And to add to the joy, there came a letter from the Abbé Raynal. He had sent the *History of Corsica* to Mirabeau. And Mirabeau had replied that "the little history seems to announce a genius of the first rank." Raynal said that this also was his own opinion. No wonder the flag on the Bonaparte house bore the words:

"Long live Mirabeau!"

## CHAPTER XX

### NAPOLEON COMES TO HIS KINGDOM

But, though France and Corsica were made one, the soldiers of King Louis remained on the island. These soldiers, naturally, did not enjoy the idea of being the fellow-countrymen of the men over whom they had tyrannized. They were filled with anger, especially against the Bonapartes and Napoleon. The Commander of the Citadel of Ajaccio actually wrote to the Minister of War in Paris about Napoleon. He said :

" This young officer was educated at the Military Schools, his sister is at St. Cyr, and his mother has been showered with benefits by the Government ; he would be much better with his regiment, for he ferments unceasingly."

The power of King Louis, however, had passed away and no notice was taken of the opinions of King Louis' officers. Christmas came and the New Year. Joseph was elected a member of the Town Council of Ajaccio. Later he and Napoleon set out for Orezza, the Corsican Spa. Joseph went to Orezza to attend a Council of the whole island ; Napoleon to take the waters for his health. In the month of April a messenger reached Orezza with news which filled every one assembled there with delirious joy. Paoli had left England at the request of the French Parliament. He had landed in France and reached Paris. The Council, of which Joseph was a member, at once sent off messengers to meet the hero and bring him in triumph to his native land.

These messengers reached Paris about April 20, 1790,

Paoli had already been nearly a month in the capital and had become the hero of France as well as of Corsica. He had even been received by King Louis and Queen Marie Antoinette and all the Princes at the Tuileries —for the King and Queen of France now were no more than the humble servants of the Parliament and the people. That which they were told to do, that they did.

On April 22, Paoli and the messengers appeared before the Parliament, and Paoli was hailed as the hero and martyr of Liberty. A few days later the Corsican patriot rode side by side with Lafayette at a great review of troops in the Champ de Mars. Paoli was the lion of the hour. Nor was it only the King and the Parliament who honoured him; not only Mirabeau and Lafayette; Robespierre also and those fierce spirits "the Society of the Friends of the Constitution"—the Jacobins.

When the honours and the feastings, which were meant to show the good will of the French Revolution towards Corsica, were over, Paoli set out for Marseilles. At Lyons he was met by Joseph Bonaparte and Pozzo di Borgo who had been sent by the Town Council of Ajaccio to meet him. Paoli embraced the eldest son of the man who, twenty years before, had been his friend. He made Joseph a gift of a playing card with a portrait of himself—Paoli—drawn on the back of it.

"That portrait," he said, "was drawn by your father twenty years ago."

A little later, on the way from Ajaccio to Orezza, Joseph and Napoleon met Paoli. For the first time in his life Napoleon set eyes on the man who had been his idol, his example, and his strength since his earliest childhood.

The moment must have deprived the young man almost of breath. Yet he managed, by a strong effort, to hide his emotion. He remained, even at this supreme hour of his life, true to his Spartan ideal; even in Paoli's presence he was still "one of Paoli's men." This is certain because, before the hero parted from Napoleon on that occasion

of their first meeting, he uttered his famous estimate of the young man's character.

"You are cast," he declared, "in the ancient mould. You are one of Plutarch's men."

Napoleon had come, at last, to his kingdom!

## CHAPTER XXI

### A REBUKE

Paoli, the beloved of England, the darling of France, and his two young friends rode on together to Orezza. They came to the bridge of Ponte Nuovo, the battlefield where the troops of the French King, twenty-one years before, had finally defeated the Corsican army and so completed their conquest of Corsica.

Paoli stopped to survey once again that fatal field on which his hopes had been blotted out and from which he had fled, an outcast and an exile, to his English refuge. The young men at his side, it may be supposed, gazed at him in veneration. The very name of the battle of Ponte Nuovo was sacred in their minds, a memory most bitter and yet most precious. To think that, in this new dawn of freedom and glorious restoration, they should be privileged to look on that scene in the company of the man who had played the chief part in it!

I often wonder what were Napoleon's thoughts at that moment. For he knew that, on the black day of Ponte Nuovo, his father had stood beside Paoli and fought by his side. And he knew, too, that his mother, who was to give birth to him two months later, had been present, almost on the actual battlefield. Stranger still, the great Mirabeau, the patriot of France, had been ranged, that day, in the ranks of the King of France against the Corsican people. Mirabeau, one of the victors of Ponte Nuovo, had now proclaimed publicly his regret and his shame for that encounter; Paoli, the defeated, was acknowledged, now, by the whole world as the true victor.

The young man's eyes sought the tall figure of his chief.

Paoli was living over again, he could see, the events of the terrible day. At sixty-five years of age the hero looked, still, a young man. His eyes had not lost their clearness, nor his face its resolution.

Suddenly Paoli began to speak. With outstretched hand he showed his young companions how he had placed his soldiers and how the troops of the King of France had been placed.

He ceased speaking. Napoleon swept the bridge, and the heights beyond it, with his glance. He turned to his master:

"Would it not, General," he said, "have been better if you had made a different disposition . . . ?"

He stopped, abashed at his own boldness.

The old man—or so Joseph has recounted—cast on him a look of amazement. A shade of annoyance crossed Paoli's face. Of all things which he had expected at this moment criticism, in any shape or form, was the last. They rode on to Orezza. A few days later Paoli was restored to his old place as leader and ruler of Corsica.

Meanwhile Napoleon was getting to know his brothers and sisters better. He loved Joseph with all his heart; but his esteem for Lucien was tempered. Lucien, at sixteen, was the bad boy of the Bonaparte family. He did and said what he liked and he was not over anxious to help his mother. His enthusiasm for the French Revolution, too, was absolutely red-hot, and he had taken, already, a dislike to Paoli who, he said, was more of an Englishman than a Corsican. Louis, on the other hand, at thirteen years of age was a charming and very modest lad of whom the young officer cordially approved and whom he soon grew to love devotedly. When the time came to return to his regiment he asked his mother to let him take Louis with him and promised to educate the lad—an arrangement of which poor harassed Letitia was only too glad to avail herself.

Storms delayed the brothers, but they reached Auxonne

on February 12, 1791, having spent a night on the way at the café of good Mademoiselle Bou. Napoleon's pay was still a pound a week, and this had now to serve for two; but he was lucky enough to get rooms in barracks—"first staircase, No. 16." One of these rooms, Napoleon's, had "a wretched, curtainless bed, a table in the embrasure of the window, some books, papers, a portmanteau, an old wooden box, and two chairs"; the other, Louis', possessed only a mattress.

It was important to spend as little as possible on food, and so Napoleon resolved to do his own and his brother's cooking. He learned how to prepare a "nourishing broth," which formed the main meal of the day, and this was the only food—except dry bread—which the boys had for a considerable time. Napoleon also brushed and mended all his own and all Louis' clothes.

"Do you know how I managed it?" he said, twenty years later. "It was by never setting foot in society or in a café; by eating dry bread; and by brushing my clothes myself so that they should last longer."

Every outlay had to be carefully considered, and there is still in existence a tailor's bill on which apparently the thrifty lad gained a reduction of twopence.

The day was divided at first between military duties, authorship, and the education of Louis. Napoleon no longer, of course, desired, as a matter of conscience, to leave the French Army. Corsica and France having entered into an equal partnership, and the French people having so nobly honoured Paoli and the Corsicans, the young man was proud to be called a soldier of France. He had begun to love the France of the Revolution, and to honour her. But, for private reasons, he was still desperately anxious to succeed as an author, for the hardships his mother was enduring were never absent from his mind. It was not enough to have relieved her of the care of Louis; he wanted to see her in comfort. For this reason he set about at once trying to find a publisher for the *History of Corsica*, the manuscript of which had been returned to him by the Abbé Raynal with Mirabeau's

flattering criticism. Some one, who saw him engaged on this quest, wrote afterwards that, one evening when he happened to be dining with a publisher, there was announced and entered the dining-room, "a young artillery officer, extremely thin, very brown, with piercing eyes, a serious expression and a slight Italian accent."

The young officer refused to dine, but accepted a glass of half wine, half water. He did not speak during the meal, and when the meal was over he went, at once, with the publisher, into the study.

Unfortunately no publisher desired to take the risk of producing the *History of Corsica*. This was a heavy blow. But it seems to have occurred to Napoleon—or perhaps one of the publishers urged it on him—that if certain improvements were made the work might still stand a chance. In any case the young man wrote to Paoli for help and advice and enclosed, in the letter, a pamphlet he had written against one of the Corsican "noblemen." To his utter amazement Paoli snubbed him—by return of post.

"Do not give yourself the trouble. . . . I cannot now spare time to open my boxes to find the writings you refer to. For the rest, *history is not written in tender years*. . . ."

Alas, all the hopes of the midnight scholar! But Napoleon seems to have borne his disappointment in a very humble spirit. He put his *History of Corsica* away and, from that time, devoted himself with his whole heart to Louis' education. He even insisted on hearing the boy recite his catechism for his first Communion, for, though Napoleon himself shared fully Mirabeau's and Paoli's views about the Roman Catholic Church, yet he felt that he ought to insist on his brother receiving proper religious instruction.

There was no time even for love-making, and certainly no money to spend on girls, and hence it is not surprising, perhaps, to find a note in one of the young officer's diaries of this period:

"I believe love to be hurtful to society and to man's

individual happiness. I believe, in short, that love does more harm than good."

Poor Napoleon! He had failed as an author; he had actually been rebuked by his beloved Paoli; and he was not even, at twenty-two, in a position to solace himself with feminine society. He must set his teeth again, he must work harder than ever; he must think himself fortunate, now, if he obtained soldiers' bread to eat.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

One bit of good fortune, however, came to make amends for all that bad fortune. In May 1791 Napoleon was raised to the rank of a First Lieutenant. He was told to return to Valence, and soon found himself back again in the house of Mademoiselle Bou. His old room was occupied by another tenant, and he had, therefore, to content himself with a different room.

Louis was still with him and his pay was still desperately small in relation to his needs. Yet he became a subscriber, once more, to the circulating library of which he had been a member during his first stay in the town. This was not mere indulgence. Napoleon still hoped to become an author, and as the Academy of the City of Lyons had offered a money prize for the best essay on "Happiness," he had made up his mind to compete for it. He went out of his way, in that essay, to bless Paoli, whom he described as being "full of that genius which Nature only unites in one man for the consolation of nations."

This was distinctly handsome after the nasty snub he had received.

The essay, as some one has pointed out, might have been written by a Scottish student of the last generation, so full is it of the praise of plain living and high thinking. And, queerly enough, most of the descriptions which it contains of Paoli's government in Corsica, before Napoleon was born, are similar to the descriptions of that government given by the famous Scotsman, Boswell—of Dr. Johnson fame—whose work on Corsica, as has been said, was devoured by Napoleon at Brienne. Boswell is stated

to have confessed afterwards that he invented most of the wonderful things he wrote about Paoli, so that the very strange possibility emerges that Napoleon modelled his life, not on the real Paoli, but on the Paoli whom the Scotsman created out of his own imagination.

If that is so, then Napoleon's character owes perhaps as much to Scotland as to Corsica : an idea which would explain some at least of its most mysterious elements.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SOUTHERN BLOOD

It was on June 16, 1791, that Napoleon and Louis came to Valence. Their poverty and wretchedness had by no means prevented them from taking an interest in the tremendous events going on in Paris, and, with the whole of France, they had mourned, in the month of April, the sudden death of Mirabeau.

The young Corsicans, probably, had no clear idea what the passing of Mirabeau from the stage meant—for they looked on him, as every one looked on him, merely as the leader of the Revolution. In fact, however, Mirabeau had also, in those last days of his life, become the private adviser of the King. Mirabeau believed that King Louis was necessary to France, just as strongly as he believed that freedom from Versailles and the "Glittering Beings" was necessary to France. He wanted to see the King become the leader of the French people, the first man in the Revolution, the head of the new Government of the People.

There is just a chance that, had Mirabeau lived, this might have come to pass. But when that great, splendid, tragic figure was removed all hope of such a solution vanished away. In spite of the hundreds of warnings against such a course which they had received from Mirabeau, the King and Queen, at the beginning of June, made secret preparations to escape from Paris and from France.

They meant to fly the country, as so many of their nobles and higher clergy, as their own nearest relations had already done. And they very nearly succeeded in this enterprise. Indeed, but for the mistake of the

postilions of the royal carriage, which had left Paris in the dead of night with the King and Queen and their children, and had come, across France, to within a few miles of the frontier, and safety, success would have been achieved. As it was, the postilions took the low road into the town of Varennes, whereas the fresh team of horses, which had been ordered to await the carriage in that town, was ready on the high road.

The royal carriage stopped at an inn at which, it was supposed, the fresh team would be found waiting. There was no team. The King, full of thankfulness at his escape, put his head out of the window. The innkeeper, a fierce Republican, recognized him in spite of the darkness.

The carriage drove on about a mile—to a bridge. On the bridge were soldiers, warned by the innkeeper and determined to prevent the King's escape.

It was the night of June 21. The royal carriage was turned back and poor King Louis, a prisoner now, sat down to supper in the inn, the owner of which had just secured him and his Queen as victims of the guillotine. A little later the mournful procession of recaptured Royalty drove, under escort, into a Paris which maintained that day the silence of death.

For the moment the King was allowed to return to his palace. But France, when the news became known, thrilled with anger. France had hated Versailles but not, so far, King Louis himself. Indeed, there had been risings and riots in King Louis' favour in many different parts of the country and notably in Marseilles—for large numbers of Frenchmen had heard with shame and horror of the dreadful march of the fishwives and the prostitutes to Versailles and of the attempt these foul creatures had made to assassinate the King and Queen.

But the flight of the King put a different complexion on things. France saw in it not merely an attempt to escape from danger, but also an attempt to reach those armies of the enemies of France which were gathering on her frontiers.

The Queen, Marie Antoinette, was the sister of the

Emperor of Austria, and every Frenchman believed that the Queen's brother would try to put her and her husband back into their old position at Versailles. In other words, Versailles was to be set going again by means of the muskets and bayonets of Austrian soldiers. The King and the "Glittering Beings," having made good their escape, would be sure to return at the head of foreign troops and would, when they returned—so the story ran—take terrible revenge on the people who had rebelled against them.

"Thank God," cried twenty millions of Frenchmen, "the King has been taken prisoner and brought back to Paris. They will not dare to attack us now, because both the King and the Queen and their children are in our hands to do with what we please."

Napoleon shared this feeling to the full. On the night on which news of the King's flight reached Valence he went to a meeting of the local Revolutionary Club and swore of his own free will "to be faithful to the Nation and the Law." The name of the King was not mentioned.

A week later an order came from Paris, from the Parliament, requiring every officer to sign a new oath by which he bound himself to defend France against her enemies and to obey no orders except those of the Parliament. Napoleon gladly put his name to this document, but many of his brother officers, who were still "King's men," refused to sign and hurriedly fled out of France.

On July 14, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, Napoleon attended a great public meeting and, later, a banquet held by those who supported the Revolution. He repeated his new oath in public on that occasion, and made, in addition, a speech in which he expressed, with all the fervour at his command, the love he bore to the Revolution and the desire which he felt to serve it. It was the Revolution, he said, which had welcomed Corsica, as a free country, into the bosom of France and which had done honour to Paoli.

"The Southern blood, which flows in my veins," he wrote to a friend, "rushes with the swiftness of the Rhône."

The Southern blood, though, was calling him back to Corsica where the enemies of the French Revolution were becoming increasingly busy and where these enemies were threatening already, as he had been informed, to call in the ships of the King of England to strengthen their hands against the French Revolution. Napoleon explained matters to his superior officers and was given leave to return home. He and Louis sailed for Corsica in September 1791.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE FIRST BATTLE

When Napoleon had left home, eight months before, practically the entire population of Corsica had been devoted to the French Revolution. On his return his brothers soon made him aware that all this was changed. Paoli, said Lucien, is doing what I knew that he would do. He is winning over the island to the side of the King of England against the French. Paoli, as I told you, has become an Englishman.

Napoleon refused to believe that, because Paoli had openly professed his love of the French Revolution. What was Lucien's opinion worth against Paoli's solemn word? The young officer, with the consent of his Colonel in France and of the War Office, offered himself as a candidate for the post of Lieut.-Colonel of the newly formed Corsican Volunteers and was elected—though not without a good deal of bother in which some very bad blood was caused. Lucien at once declared that Paoli had been secretly working against Napoleon because he, Napoleon, belonged to the friends of France. This was Joseph's opinion too. Joseph even advised his brother to look out for trouble.

It came soon enough—in April 1792—when one of Napoleon's volunteers had a fight with a sailor in the streets of Ajaccio. The volunteer, like his officer, was for the French, whereas the sailor was for the English. In the twinkling of an eye the whole town joined in the fight and shouts of "Down with the French!" were heard mingling with shouts of "Down with the English!"

The position became very serious when one of Napoleon's lieutenants was killed beside him, while they were trying to quell the disturbance. Napoleon then appealed to the French Commander of the Citadel—one of King Louis' men who had not yet been removed—to help him. The Commander of the Citadel refused. Napoleon instantly ordered his men to dig trenches across the streets and fire on the mob. He also sent other men to cut off the food supplies of the town.

That stopped the riot. But the friends of England were not yet disposed to give in. In their turn they appealed to the Commander of the Citadel, who at once promised to help them and brought some cannon out of the Citadel. The Commander of the Citadel, as a Royalist, naturally detested the Revolution.

The cannon were pointed at Napoleon's men. Napoleon and his brother officers, all of whom still trusted Paoli, declared that they had orders from Paoli not to quit their posts. They added that if the cannon were not at once taken back into the Citadel they would be attacked and captured by force.

Napoleon knew well what a risk he was taking in speaking in that way. For the Commander of the Citadel was his own superior officer and therefore entitled to give him orders, and to have him shot if he disobeyed them. But he relied on Paoli to put matters right for him, and to back up his statement about the orders not to quit his post. Since the Volunteers were all soldiers of the French Revolution, and since Paoli had sworn to defend the Revolution, and was the head of the Revolutionary Government in the island, that was not, surely, expecting too much—especially as one of the officers of the Volunteers had been murdered.

Napoleon was soon to learn that his idol had feet of clay. The Commander of the Citadel withdrew his cannon; but he complained of Napoleon to the Commissioners of the French Government who were then in Corsica, and accused him of being the cause of the whole trouble. *And Paoli said nothing in his young friend's defence.*

On the contrary, he uttered a sneer: "When the Government is in the hands of inexperienced young men, it's not surprising that inexperienced boys should get appointed to the command of National Guards."

Most people would have seen what an attitude of this sort meant. Paoli was quite ready to see Napoleon punished and did not mean to lift a finger to help him—if, indeed, he had not, secretly, been helping the enemy. But even with this evidence before him, the hero-worshipper would not believe that his hero was playing a double game: running with the English party and hunting with the French. He sought an interview with Paoli, who received him with apparent friendliness and spoke vaguely about appointing him to command a regiment of Volunteers in another part of the island. Napoleon was completely satisfied and even asked Paoli to take Lucien as one of his secretaries—apparently in the hope that personal contact with the great man would cure his brother of his dislike. A fresh disillusionment was in store for him. He had scarcely got home when he received a letter from Joseph telling him that "the General" was in high displeasure, and adding:

"I regret . . . you said that General Paoli had ordered you to guard your posts. If this were made public it would be prejudicial to General Paoli and then, if he explained the facts, what would be your appearance?"

Joseph added: "He [Paoli] will not amalgamate with us. That is the bottom of the affair," and urged Napoleon to return quickly to France so as to tell his own side of the story to the War Minister in Paris before his enemies had time to forestall him.

Joseph saw the facts as they were and realized how great was the danger in which his brother stood—as an officer who had defied and challenged his superior. He saw that Paoli was no true friend and guessed, apparently, that Paoli's friends in Paris would receive a hint to throw all the blame for what had occurred on Napoleon—and so, perhaps, rid Corsica, and the world, of a troublesome fellow.

He was not mistaken. Napoleon, who had lingered on at home in spite of the warning he had received, got an order from the War Office in Paris to return at once to France to explain his conduct in the riot. There was a threat of a court-martial.

His enemies had stolen a march on him.

## CHAPTER XXV

### PAOLI'S FOOL

Napoleon was undoubtedly in a very dangerous position, and to add to his troubles he had been temporarily suspended from his military duties, and so deprived of his pay. If the inquiry went against him, and he escaped the punishment of death, he would certainly be cashiered.

He came to Paris in a dejected state of mind, arriving there on May 20, 1792. The city was in dreadful excitement, and a raging whirlpool surrounded the unhappy King and Queen in their palace of the Tuileries, now become their prison. Napoleon, in spite of his own personal anxiety, became immediately absorbed in the events going forward around him. He wrote to Joseph on his arrival :

" Paris is in the most violent convulsions. It is inundated with strangers and the roughs are very numerous. The town has been kept lighted the last three nights. The National Guard at the Tuileries to guard the King has been doubled. The household troops are said to be unsatisfactory and are to be disbanded."

He added that Pozzo di Borgo, one of Paoli's special friends, seemed to be on very good terms with the Minister of War, and then urged on his brother :

" Keep on good terms with General Paoli. He will do everything and is everything. He will be everything in the future which nobody in the world can foresee. Give news of me to the family."

Pozzo di Borgo, the man who was to prove Napoleon's worst enemy, had, as a matter of fact—acting almost certainly on Paoli's secret instructions—been trying to make things as black for Napoleon as possible. Napoleon, happily for his peace of mind, knew nothing of this. He

was exceedingly short of money and had to pawn his watch to pay his hotel bill. As it happened he had come across his old schoolfellow Bourrienne, also very short of money, and these two tried all manner of desperate expedients to pay their way—even to the extent of attempting to open a lodging-house. They failed and became poorer still. And still the War Office came to no decision about the riot at Ajaccio. Meanwhile the young officer's hatred of King Mob had been growing on him. The fearful mobs of Paris with their dreadful pikes, on the points of which there were frequently to be seen the heads of human victims massacred in the streets, filled him with loathing and despair.

On June 20, 1792, that day of martyrdom, as Napoleon and Bourrienne were taking a walk together they saw a huge mob making for the King's palace.

"Let us follow these scoundrels," Napoleon said.

Here is his own description of what he saw:

"The day before yesterday 7,000 to 8,000 men armed with pikes, hatchets, swords, guns, skewers, sharpened sticks went to the Assembly to present a petition. From there they went on to the King. The garden of the Tuileries was shut and defended by 15,000 National Guards. They threw down the gates, entered the palace, pointed the cannon against the King's apartment, threw down four doors, presented the King with two cockades, the white and the tricolour. They gave him the choice. 'Choose,' they said, 'between reigning here or at Coblentz' [where the Austrian armies were massed against France]. The King behaved well. He took the red cap. The Queen and the Prince Royal did the same. The mob was given wine to drink to the King. They remained for hours in the palace. . . . All this is unconstitutional and a very dangerous example. It is very difficult to see what will become of the Empire if events of this outrageous kind continue."

While the horrible scene was actually in progress Napoleon said to his friend:

"Why did they allow these brutes to come in? They

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ought to have shot down 500 or 600 of them with cannon, and the rest would soon have run."

That was what the young officer himself had been ready to do, and had just done, on a smaller scale, in Ajaccio. He knew what he was talking about; but he took a great risk in talking in that fashion in public. The mob which surged about him would have massacred him without the slightest mercy or compunction.

He grew more and more to detest King Mob as the days passed and the guillotine began its work in Paris. Mobs were everywhere, and mob law was becoming the only law, so that news from home to the effect that Lucien had written a furious pamphlet cursing all those who did not sympathize with the wildest excesses of the Revolution seemed horrible. Napoleon at once wrote to reprove his brother. A day or two later his time of suspense and anxiety and poverty came to an end. He heard on July 10 that he had been acquitted—with a caution—reinstated in his regiment and promoted Captain as from the previous February. He was, further, given permission to return if he liked to Corsica and to resume his command of the Volunteers there. In his first access of joy the young officer, now twenty-three years of age, seems to have thought that it was Paoli, and not the justice of his own case, who had saved him. Should he return to Corsica? His inclination was all in that direction. He wrote to Joseph:

"If I had considered only the interest of the family and my own inclination I would have come to Corsica, but you are all agreed that I should go to my regiment. So I will go."

The family knew the facts and appreciated the danger of his returning home.

Napoleon added that he had been studying astronomy which is "a fine diversion and a superb science," and said that his work—presumably the essay on "Happiness"—was finished.

"But this is not the time for printing it. *Besides, I have no longer the petty ambition to be an author.*"

He wrote this letter, which is full of the thankfulness he must have felt to be able to draw his arrears of pay, on August 7. Three days later he was to witness the final extinguishing of the reign of King Louis. Here is his own description of the awful 10th of August 1792, given at St. Helena :

" At the sound of the alarm bell and on the news that the Tuileries was being attacked, I ran to the Carrousel, to Fauvelet, brother-in-law of Bourrienne, who had a furniture shop there. He had been my comrade at the Military School at Brienne. From that house I could, at my ease, observe all the events of that day. Before I had reached the Carrousel I had met, in the Rue des Petits-Champs, a group of hideous men with a head on the top of a pike. Seeing me passably dressed, and with the appearance of a gentleman, they came towards me to make me cry, ' Long live the Nation,' which I did without difficulty as may well be imagined.

" The palace was attacked by the vilest of mobs. The King undoubtedly had for his defence as large a force as the Convention afterwards had on the 13 Vendémaire, and the enemies of the latter were far more disciplined and redoubtable. The greater part of the National Guard was for the King, one must do it that justice.

" The palace carried, and the King in the care of the Assembly, I ventured to enter the Tuileries Garden. Never again, on any of my battlefields, did I get such an impression as that given me by the masses of the corpses of the Swiss [Guards] ; perhaps it was the narrow space that exaggerated the numbers ; or the effect may have been due to its being my first experience of that kind. I saw well-dressed women indulge in acts of the utmost indecency towards the corpses. I visited all the neighbouring cafés ; everywhere passions were violent ; rage was in all hearts ; it was visible in every face although these were very far from being the common people ; and it was evident that these places were occupied every day by the same clients, for, though there was nothing peculiar in my dress, perhaps because my expression was more calm, it was plain to me that I excited hostile and defiant looks as a stranger and therefore suspected."

Napoleon expressed the opinion that if King Louis XVI had shown himself on horseback, the victory over the mob would have been his, and the Revolution, even at that eleventh hour, would have been turned into peaceful courses. That day Napoleon saw " one who was about to kill one of the guards," and said to him :

" Oh, man from the South, let us spare this unfortunate."

" Art thou from the South ? "

" Yes."

" Well, let us spare him ! "

What he witnessed on that day of blood merely confirmed Napoleon in his low opinion of the conduct of the Revolution—*as opposed to the spirit of the Revolution with which he was in the fullest sympathy.* As he had written in July :

" Those who are at the head of affairs are poor men ; it must be admitted, when one sees things at close quarters, that the people are little worth the trouble men take to obtain their favour. You know the history of Ajaccio ; that of Paris is exactly the same. Perhaps men here are even smaller, worse, greater calumniators and more censorious.

" One has to see things at close quarters to perceive that enthusiasm is no more than enthusiasm and that the French are an ancient people who are out of control."

This letter, which was addressed to the fiery Lucien, concluded :

" I embrace you and recommend you to moderate yourself in everything ; in everything, you understand, if you wish to live happily."

Lucien was very indignant at that advice from the brother whom he regarded merely as Paoli's fool.

Meanwhile fate was deciding that Napoleon should return to Corsica after all—for the school at St. Cyr where his sister Eliza was being educated was closed down a few days after the King and Queen were thrown into prison in the Temple. Eliza appealed, in her anxiety, to her brother,

who decided that it was his duty to take her home. He had not yet, happily, resigned his command of the Corsican Volunteers, and so was provided with a good reason for returning to the island. He went out to St. Cyr and brought his sister to Paris. *It was the 1st of September* 1792.

The next day the gates of the city were closed. The awful " September massacres " of priests and nobles had begun in the prisons.

It is not known to this day whether or not Napoleon saw anything of this frightful, premeditated slaughter in which the lovely Princess of Lamballe, Marie Antoinette's friend, was one of the victims. He never spoke of the September massacres. But since Paris was ringing with the awful news, and since he was in Paris, he must have heard everything: among other things, doubtless, that Madame de Lamballe's head, on a pike, had been thrust up to the window of the poor Queen's prison! He must have realized, too, that this was no mere exhibition of mob rule, but the work of a strong, a ruthless and a terrible hand which made use of the mob for its own purposes. In those days, September 2 to September 5, Napoleon, there can be no doubt, saw reason to change his view that: " Those who are at the head of affairs are poor men."

For the September massacres were meant to be, and were recognized as being, a bloody challenge to the Kings of Europe now advancing, as it seemed in overwhelming strength, against the new Republic of the French People. Every one saw in the massacres the hand of Danton, " the bloody Mirabeau," who, already, from his post as Minister of Justice had begun to organize disorganized and delirious France for the battles which she must fight.

" *There are traitors in your bosom,*" Danton had cried to France on August 25. On September 2 he forced his fellow-countrymen to drink the blood of the traitors and so, once for all, to place themselves beyond the pale of hope or mercy should the Kings of Europe triumph over them.

Danton's massacres achieved another object. They

struck terror to the hearts of all the "Glittering Beings" who remained in France, and of all their sympathizers. After September no Royalist dared to show himself. The way was thus cleared to victory over the invading armies. Indeed, while the executioners of Danton, the Man of Blood, were plunging their reeking swords in the bodies of priests and nobles and women, heedless of any plea for mercy, Danton the statesman, unafraid of the Kings, who marched by every highway over the frontiers of France, planned and organized and created. The massacres were the "awful warning" which the New France gave to the Old, and to the world at large. When, later, a still more terrible warning was given, and the head of King Louis fell, on January 21, 1793, into the sawdust basket of the guillotine on what is now the Place de la Concorde, Danton cried to the Kings in mighty defiance: "*They asked for a King, and we flung them the head of a King.*"

Napoleon as, with his sister, he left the stricken and terrified city—the city which was rousing itself at last to give battle to the Kings—must have been deep in thought. He had seen King Mob enrolled, at last, in the ranks of a strong man, "The Man of September." In blood and horror and fury, he had seen a nation called to its nationhood. The French Revolution, for all its mobs, was no longer merely another name for mob rule; it was a force, fired with a strange, most fertile enthusiasm which, at last, and however horridly, was being yoked to action.

The mobs, however, were still troublesome enough. At Marseilles Eliza's feathered hat aroused the anger of some loafers who began to shout: "Down with the Aristocrats."

Napoleon shouted back: "No more aristocrats than you are."

He snatched Eliza's hat from her head and threw it into the crowd.

That prompt action saved them both.

At Valence Mademoiselle Bou, with whom the young people stayed, gave them a present of a bunch of grapes.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### A TRAITOR

A NEW shock awaited Napoleon when he returned home. His Corsican Volunteers, whom he had left in a condition of strength and efficiency, were utterly disorganized and their pay was long in arrear. Many had deserted; those who remained were quite undisciplined.

These were the Volunteers who had joined with such great enthusiasm to oppose King Louis' soldiers and to strengthen the union of the Corsican and French peoples. King Louis' soldiers remained in the Citadel. Why, then, had the Volunteers been neglected so utterly?

Even Napoleon's stubborn determination to see nothing but honesty and good faith in Paoli was shaken. Here was proof, almost absolute proof, that Paoli had no interest in the union of the Corsican and French peoples; but, on the contrary, wished to weaken every revolutionary influence in the island.

Paoli, however, was ill. And in his absence from his post of President of the Parliament, Saliceti, the Vice-President, and others of the French party, were exercising a good deal of influence. Napoleon therefore quietly set about the difficult task of pulling his men together, though he remarked in a letter to the other Lieut.-Colonel of the Volunteers:

"The General [Paoli] is very displeased with the Volunteer battalions in general, and ours in particular. We must not exhibit the true state of affairs [*i.e.* the lack of discipline and the unpaid state of the corps]; the best policy is quite the contrary. We must punish officers and soldiers who resist discipline, but not accuse them publicly except in the last extremity."

Napoleon, in other words, meant to discharge faithfully his duty as an officer of the united French and Corsican peoples. But he did not wish to expose the fact that his hero, Paoli, had made this task a vastly difficult one—for that must have brought down on Paoli the hatred of the revolutionary leaders in France, and Napoleon could not bring himself to expose the man whom he had loved all his life to so terrible a danger. Nevertheless his action in reorganizing his men was—and he knew that it was—a challenge to Paoli's English policy. Napoleon, now, had definitely taken sides against Paoli.

He was greatly troubled at the necessity which was thus thrust on him, for to oppose Paoli was to wound his own soul. It was like turning his sword against himself. Indeed, there is little doubt that, before he came to a final decision, he passed through a period of terrible doubt and hesitation—doubt and hesitation so great that he actually thought of giving up his military career and going to India to try his fortune there. When his mother showed him how poor she was, he is said to have told her that he would become a Nabob and provide large marriage portions for his sisters ; he also talked of entering the service of the " John " company. This talk followed an interview he had had with Paoli in the course of which that wily old man no doubt tried to persuade him, that the French Revolution would soon be suppressed and that, then, Corsica would fall, once more, under the heel of King Louis. The friendship of England, therefore, was the best safeguard the island could have. Paoli, on this or some other occasion, called the English " a nation of shopkeepers "—a phrase Napoleon never forgot.

These had been Napoleon's own thoughts up to the moment when the Revolution began. They would have been his thoughts still had he really feared that the Revolution would be crushed—for Corsica came first in his thoughts. But, after he had heard Paoli and after he had considered the advice Paoli gave him to go to India, he knew that he must reject that advice. He belonged

to the French Revolution—to the peoples against the Kings. He could not desert the Revolution even to please the beloved hero of his boyhood. He must throw in his lot with Saliceti and the French party against Paoli and the English party. He told Paoli that Corsica was French and that so she must remain.

Just when he had finally taken this decision, he received an order from France to join his Volunteers to an expedition being fitted out in Marseilles to go to Sardinia to help the revolutionaries of that island against their King. The French fleet reached Ajaccio in December. The sailors proved to be the very scum of Marseilles and, before they had been in port a few days, actually rioted and murdered two of Napoleon's Volunteers. They then carried the heads of these murdered men round the town on pikes in the approved Parisian fashion. It was only by supreme efforts that Napoleon and his officers prevented their men from retaliating and killing every Frenchman. After this, co-operation between the Corsicans and the French was, of course, impossible.

So a new arrangement was made. The French sailors departed alone for Sardinia and the Volunteers, under Paoli's nephew, were taken on a French warship to an island of the Maddalena group, belonging to Sardinia. The Volunteers captured a tower on this island ; and Napoleon was busy constructing a battery, by which to secure a further advance, when the " blue-jackets " on the French warship, who had also been recruited from the rabble of Marseilles, became panic-stricken, mutinied and tried to take the ship out of range of the Sardinian guns. It was with the greatest difficulty that Napoleon managed to get his men back on board. Later on, some of the mutineers, who had been sternly dealt with, made a rush at Napoleon, calling him an aristocrat and threatening to hang him. But one of his Volunteers saved him.

In spite of this miserable experience, which convinced many Corsicans that the French Revolution was only another name for the rule of King Mob, Napoleon remained faithful to his oath. When he got back to Ajaccio he

heard that King Louis had been put to death in Paris and that Saliceti had, as a Corsican member of the French Parliament, voted for the King's death. He received, at the same time, a letter from Saliceti himself in which he declared openly that Paoli was a traitor to France. Paoli, said Saliceti, is merely keeping up a pretence of being loyal to the French Revolution until he is able to hand Corsica over to the King of England.

That was what Joseph and Lucien had said from the beginning. It was what Napoleon himself had, at last, been forced to realize. And to make things worse still, there came the news that war had broken out between the French Revolution and the English King. On the news of the execution of King Louis, the King of England had joined with the Kings of Europe to crush the Revolution and bring back the rule of Versailles.

If Napoleon had hesitated before, now he threw his hesitation away. The Revolution, which had set Corsica free of the hands which oppressed her, was his Revolution as much as any Frenchman's. He belonged to the Revolution body and soul, and he resolved that he would serve it faithfully to the last. He told his brothers and sisters this, and they welcomed his enthusiasm. Lucien, fiery as ever, went off to France, to take up a post he had obtained in that country. Joseph set out for Bastia in the north of Corsica to meet Saliceti, who was about to return to the island. Corsica began to divide into two separate camps—those who, with Paoli, meant to hand over the island to the English King, and those who, with Saliceti and the Bonapartes, meant to defeat that project. Napoleon began to try to bring over Ajaccio to the French side.

He had scarcely entered on this work when the news reached him that the Revolutionary Government had ordered the arrest of Paoli as a traitor. Napoleon knew too well that this charge was justified; yet his old love of his boyhood's idol rose uppermost in his heart. It was one thing to oppose Paoli; it was another thing to think of Paoli a prisoner, carried in chains to Paris and

to the guillotine—supposing that he should be arrested. Napoleon sat down, there and then, and wrote a defence of his hero in which, like a barrister, he said everything in Paoli's favour which it was possible with honesty to say. He sent this defence off to the French Government.

He must have known very well how great a risk he was taking. For if Paoli was arrested and condemned by the terrible Revolutionary Tribunal in Paris, his defender would probably be condemned with him. On the other hand, if Paoli managed to drive the French Republicans out of Corsica, he, Napoleon, would get no credit for his defence seeing that he and all his family belonged openly to the French party. Paoli had already done his best to get Napoleon discredited and ruined—and Napoleon, by this time, realized that fact.

I confess that this very brave act of Napoleon's fills me with admiration. No doubt, as a good revolutionary, he should, for the sake of Corsica as well as of France, have joined the hue and cry against Paoli which all the revolutionaries were then beginning. No doubt he should—for the same reason—have approved of the order for the old man's arrest. I am not defending him against these charges; but I think that those who have themselves loved and venerated some leader or some master will understand the feelings which prompted him. He did not cease to oppose Paoli; he did not cease to work for the Revolution to which all his allegiance was given; he did not hesitate to expose himself to the hatred of the English party in Corsica. But, because of his boyhood's worship, because of all that Paoli had meant to him and been to him, he did what lay in his power, no matter at what risk to himself, to soften the hearts of the old man's accusers.

Napoleon made many mistakes, he committed many faults; but this fault, perhaps, was the least of all those which he ever committed.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### A PRICE ON HIS HEAD

No sooner was Napoleon's defence of Paoli despatched to Paris than the news arrived in Corsica that the reason of the order for the arrest of the old man was a speech delivered in France by Lucien. Lucien, in that wild speech, had actually demanded the head of his father's and mother's friend :

"*Give his head to the knife*"

he had cried.

This news filled Napoleon with horror ; it appalled him to think that a boy of eighteen—his own brother—should have shown such utter lack of humanity. Nevertheless he had his duty to the Revolution to perform. Several of the Corsican towns were wholly French in sympathy in spite of Paoli, and he hoped soon to add Ajaccio to that number. Unfortunately for this hope his own Volunteers, who had not forgiven the French the treatment they had received before, and during, the Sardinian expedition, went over to the side of Paoli and the English and took possession of the Citadel against the French party. Napoleon and his friends were thus unable to accomplish anything.

The young officer resolved to go to Bastia, where Joseph was still at work with Saliceti, in the hope that a plan of campaign for the conquest of Ajaccio might be agreed on—for Paoli was now reported to be gathering an army about him to drive the French sympathizers out of the island. On the way to Bastia, however, Napoleon was attacked by a body of Paoli's followers who took him prisoner.

His situation was a highly dangerous one, for, though as yet he was unaware of the fact, Paoli had resolved on his arrest and the arrest of all his family. Death was close at hand. Happily some members of the French party—peasants—who heard of the capture managed to get into touch with the young man. They secured for him means of escape, and told him of the great peril in which his mother and sisters were now placed.

Napoleon instantly made up his mind to return home, and after many adventures succeeded in doing so. He learned that everything was quiet in Ajaccio. Nevertheless it was certain that there was a price on his own head. So, instead of going home, and so putting his mother in danger, he went secretly to his cousin's house. This cousin had been Mayor of the town and was a man of influence. He told Napoleon that every hour the feeling for Paoli and England against France was growing stronger, and that, if the town was not to be lost to the Revolution, help must be obtained at once from Bastia. It was, he said, Napoleon's duty to make a second attempt to reach that place. Napoleon agreed, and steps were immediately taken to get him away from the town in a boat.

A start could not, however, be made for some hours, and meanwhile there was great danger. The ex-Mayor collected as many of his friends as he could find and induced them to come, armed, to his house, to spend the night there. That precaution saved Napoleon's life. For, early in the night, a party of Paoli's men came to the door and demanded admittance. The ex-Mayor agreed to admit the leader of the party only. When this man had entered, he shut the door behind him.

"What do you want?"

"We want Napoleon Bonaparte who is said to be concealed in this house."

The ex-Mayor led the man along a corridor and let him see the glint of weapons. It was enough. The friend of Paoli realized that, at a word from his companion, he would be shot down. He took himself off and withdrew his men. Half an hour later Napoleon was escorted

through the darkness to the harbour. When morning broke he was safe at sea.

Terrible anxiety, however, preyed on his mind. For, though, so far, his mother and sisters and brothers were safe, and though the ex-Mayor had promised to protect them, yet it was impossible to know what might happen. Paoli, his hero, the man whom but yesterday he had risked his life to defend, was now hunting him to his death ; fury of that kind would hardly spare women or children. Not a moment, therefore, could be wasted. The young man put ashore at the first opportunity and secured a horse from his supporters. He made a rapid journey to Bastia.

His friends there decided to give him the help he required, and on May 23, 1793—that year of horror—ships carrying 400 men, and under the orders of Saliceti, Joseph, and Napoleon, sailed for Ajaccio.

But the blow which Napoleon so greatly dreaded had already fallen on Letitia and her children.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE GRATITUDE OF PAOLI

On the evening of the day, May 23, 1793, on which Napoleon set sail to come to Ajaccio, his mother received a message from a friend warning her that a large body of Paoli's men had reached the outskirts of the town and were about to march to her house. The unhappy woman had with her Eliza, aged fifteen and a half, Louis aged fourteen, Pauline aged twelve, Caroline aged ten and a half, and Jerome aged eight. She resolved to lose not a moment in escaping, because she had learned, in those last months, how furious was the hatred of Paoli against her and hers. Taking what they could carry the family drove off to their small "country house" among the vineyards.

It was fortunate for them that they did so, for scarcely were they gone before a raging crowd gathered in the narrow streets about their door—a crowd sent by Paoli for the purpose of wreaking vengeance on the wife and children of his old friend and aide-de-camp and on the mother and brothers and sisters of the man who had endured, for his sake, a thousand sneers and buffets. If only the poor, brave, little schoolboy of Brienne, who had dared, even in that shrine of the "Glittering Beings," in that place of Kings, to call himself "One of Paoli's men" could have foreseen this day! If only the boy, eating one meal a day and working both day and night that he might find the means to be worthy of Paoli and to give the world the heroic *History of Corsica* could have foreseen this day! If only Mirabeau, that great generous-hearted Frenchman, whose hand Paoli had taken in token of lasting friendship

between Corsica and France and whose lavish favours the old Corsican had not scrupled, as an avowed friend of the Revolution, to receive, could have foreseen this day!

Paoli's men howled with rage to find their victims escaped. But if they could not seize the widow and her children, at least they could sack her house. The door was burst in and the ruffianly mob began its work of destruction.

And meanwhile the widow, stripped now of all her worldly possessions, with her frightened children lay in hiding awaiting any news which might be brought to her by faithful friends. The news, when it came, was enough to rob her of all her courage. Paoli's men were determined to follow her to her retreat and drag her from it.

Letitia, at forty-two, was still the Letitia, the Spartan woman, who had attended her husband almost on the battlefield, and afterwards, though about to become the mother of Napoleon, had fled with Charles to the mountains. She knew that her older sons would not fail her, if it was humanly possible to come to her rescue, and so she made the heroic resolve to flee with her children into the " bush " —that desolate scrub which stretches along the Corsican foothills—in order to reach a new place of refuge on the other side of the Bay of Ajaccio.

On the morning of May 25 the little party set off. The way was difficult and the widow and her older son and daughter had to help the younger children over jagged rocks and deep and perilous ravines. But the unflinching heart of Letitia was not dismayed and she infused her own courage into the hearts of her boys and girls.

They had little or no food and had to live on what they could find or what they could obtain from shepherds. Night fell and found them without a roof, and it was only on the next day that they came to their destination, the Capitello tower. Here, for the moment, they were safe. And here, on May 29, Napoleon and Joseph, having obtained news of their mother's flight, found them.

Napoleon's joy in that meeting must have been intense, for twenty-eight years later, at St. Helena, when

he made his will, he left £4,000 to the man who had warned his mother of her danger, £4,000 to the peasants who had helped him to escape from the hands of Paoli's men and told him of the threat to his mother and sisters and brothers, and £4,000 to his cousin, the ex-Mayor, who had given him shelter. The conquest of half the world lay in those twenty-eight years, and yet the mind of the Conqueror went back, in supreme gratitude, to these his faithful friends and fellow-countrymen.

It was found to be impossible to take Ajaccio without the help of a land force, and so Napoleon and Joseph rejoined their mother whom they had sent, by boat, to the house of an old and trusted friend. A family council was held and the terrible facts of the situation were squarely faced.

They were utterly and completely ruined, for all the small property they possessed had been destroyed by Paoli's mob. The only resource left to this family of nine persons was Napoleon's pay as Captain in the French Artillery. Nor dared they stay in Corsica a day longer. Letitia saw that she must take her children to France and trust once again to Providence to help her. Letitia had always trusted Providence all the days of her life.

No sooner were the Bonapartes driven out than Corsica became an English possession. King George III, indeed, took the title of " King of Corsica."

END OF BOOK I

# BOOK II

## THE THUNDERBOLT

"There was a time when every man who had a soul to save was bound to be a Jacobin."

NAPOLEON.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A FIGHT TO THE DEATH

The Bonapartes reached Toulon, where Lucien was now staying, on June 13, 1793. They were penniless. Their only hope was that Saliceti, who as a member of the French Parliament had some influence, might obtain work for Joseph. Napoleon, after finding a cheap lodging for his mother outside of the town, hurried off to rejoin his regiment at Nice. He was delighted to find that, in his absence, he had been raised to the rank of Captain-Commandant (Major). His pay had slightly increased.

Every sympathy of his soul was given to the French Revolution which he believed passionately could alone save Corsica and France from the oppressing hands of Kings and Priests. He drew up a memorandum for the French Government showing how Corsica might be won again for France, and this was carried by Saliceti—who took Joseph with him—to Paris.

The Revolution was not prospering. The French people were being attacked by all the Kings of Europe. One of their greatest generals, Dumouriez, had, on the actual field of battle, deserted the People's Cause for that of the Kings'. A terrible civil war, supported by the King of England, had begun in Normandy and Brittany where the peasants loved their priests and were roused to fury at the ill-treatment, as they thought, of the Church by the Revolution.

The great cities of Lyons and Marseilles and Bordeaux, all of which had always been bitterly jealous of Paris, revolted and declared for the little son of King Louis, the poor, little, golden-haired lad then approaching his

martyrdom in his awful prison in the capital. The armies of the King of Spain were marching into France from the south; the armies of Austria were invading her from the north and east; the ships of the King of England had bottled up all her harbours. The Revolution staggered; the hands of Kings and Priests tightened on its throat.

But there were strong men, men of iron and men of blood, in the French Parliament, and already these terrible patriots were making ready to act. One of them, Danton, "the man of September," the man who had forced Paris to drink blood the year before, when she grew frightened of the Austrian armies, now threatened the existing Government of the Republic. Men called that existing Government "the Gironde." Its members were kindly folk, clever folk, folk with big heads packed full of generous and noble ideas; but folk, in vulgar phrase, without "guts." And "guts" alone could save the Revolution.

Danton had already terrified these high-minded dreamers out of their wits. It was he, with his horrible, pock-marked, yet magnificent face, who had forced them to bring King Louis to trial. At the trial of the King the fear of Danton, the man of the flagons of blood, had haunted every timorous mind much more than the fear of the Kings, the enemies of the Revolution, who said that if a hair of King Louis' head was injured, rivers of French blood would be spilt when they reached Paris. The "Dreamers" were nervous enough about the threats of the Kings and the Priests; but Danton made them shudder. Shuddering, they had voted, one after the other, for the death of King Louis, though they would gladly have avoided that terrible vote.

"Now," said Danton, glaring horribly at them, "you are all stained with the Royal blood. Bestir yourselves, because you have nothing to hope for from the Kings any longer."

On the day of King Louis' execution the spirit of Danton had brooded over Paris. It was Danton, again, who had forced that awful cup to the lips of France, grinding the brim against set teeth. What if King Louis had displayed,

on that January morning, a lovely courage and a lovely kindness! What if, as he drove down from his prison in his closed carriage, past the palace where once he had reigned, into the vast assembly of the men and women who had called him "the Good" and blessed him, he showed not a sign of fear nor of bitterness! What if his appearance on the scaffold, beside the raised and gleaming knife of the guillotine, had hushed that great multitude to deathly silence! What if, after the fall of the axe, Sanson the executioner had snatched up the Royal head and showed its bloody, twitching features to the people and by that sight had chilled the hearts of thousands! The Revolution must be saved. Weak men must be lashed to courage by fear and horror.

The bloody whips, which Danton wielded in his great hands, made of France, abashed and timorous, the lion of the Nations.

But even these bloody whips were not able to give the "Dreamers" the strength of purpose they needed. It is the everlasting curse of Liberals that they believe that without the shedding of blood there can be remission. Danton determined that the "Dreamers" should follow King Louis to the guillotine.

He had, ready to his hand, the means of destroying them. The Parliament sat in a hall the back benches of which were high up, near the roof. They called these back benches, and the people who sat on them, "The Mountain." The Men of the Mountain, soon to become the "Men of the Terror," were ready to obey Danton's orders.

The "Dreamers" were accused of being—dreamers. They were swept to prison and the scaffold, they and their good, kind, generous, feeble ideas. Blood and Iron reigned in their stead: Danton, with Robespierre and Carnot, in the background, and the horrible doctor, Marat, the mad dog of the Revolution, "the Friend of the People." Danton formed his War Council—"the Committee of Public Safety" it was called—and swept France clear of the "Glittering Beings" and their friends the priests.

Carnot, a member of the War Council, became the Master of the Armies of France, the Minister of War.

The Parliament was still there; but it bowed the knee to Danton and his War Council and to the Club of the Jacobins, that private meeting-place of the Men of the Mountain which had its roots deep in the heart of Paris and its branches in every village in France.

The Revolution had begun to devour its own children.

Napoleon, in spite of his "blue blood," was allowed to keep his commission because of the way he had defended the Revolution in Corsica. That was Saliceti's doing; he told, in Paris, the story of what had happened. And because he told that story the Bonapartes received, as they deserved to receive, immediate help from the French Government. Joseph got an appointment as Commissioner with the Army which carried a salary of £240 a year with lodging and expenses, and Lucien was made a Superintendent of Stores. In addition Letitia received her share of the £24,000 which the French Government had set aside to help the Corsican refugees whom Paoli had driven out of the island because of their loyalty to the French Revolution. That Providence in whom the poor widow had put her trust had not forsaken her.

Meanwhile Napoleon was working like a slave to put the guns under his charge in a state of efficiency. He was thinking, too; and he had, whole-heartedly, given his support to the new Government of the Men of Blood and Iron.

"Do you not realize," he wrote, "that this is a fight to the death between the patriots and the despots of Europe?"

And later on, speaking of this time he declared:

"There was a time when every man who had a soul to save was bound to be a Jacobin."

For the intense and terrible need of the Revolution at that hour was ruthlessness—ruthless patriotism which should strangle and stamp out opposition and weakness at home and which should repel invasion on all the frontiers. The "Glittering Beings" and their

sympathizers; the Priests and their people; the Kings and their soldiers; King George and his ships,—what, against this mighty array of power, could the undisciplined, ill-led, ill-found armies of the common folk hope to accomplish without an iron leadership and an iron support? The business of the new War Council was to teach a whole nation to eat and to love soldiers' bread, to destroy utterly all weakness and all opposition at home, and to fling back, by the force of a new discipline, the foreigner and the royalist.

Those who shudder at the sight of the guillotine and the long line of blood-red carts which fed it, day by day, with fresh victims; those whose hearts quail as they read of the hideous shootings and drownings, the massacres of old and young, of very young children; those who feel their souls revolted at the spectacle of the horrible Marat, the grand, fierce, bullying Danton, the sour, spinsterish, bloodthirsty Robespierre, should remember that shudderings and horror were the surest weapons of these men against a whole world of their nation's enemies —the fleets of England, the armies of Europe, the faith of the Churches. Not this world only, but even the reputed powers of Eternity made war on France to crush and destroy her new freedom and to restore the rule of Versailles and the "Glittering Beings."

## CHAPTER XXX

### A PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

The War Council in Paris soon suffered a severe shock. This was nothing less than the treachery of the great naval base of Toulon, the Portsmouth of France. The people of Toulon opened their harbour—one of the best in the world—to the ships of the King of England and the King of Spain.

The news caused absolute dismay among the friends of the Revolution. How could France hope to save herself from the Kings when Frenchmen gave the Kings help? Who could doubt, any longer, that the country was full of friends of the "Glittering Beings," men who preferred to hand over their native land to foreigners rather than to see the spirit of Versailles crushed, men who were acting just as King Louis and Queen Marie Antoinette had acted while any power remained to them? These men were making use of the jealousy of one city for another and one district for another to stir up trouble.

But Paris was full of fight. The War Council gathered an army in the South and retook both Lyons and Marseilles. The red guillotine and the red carts, which fed the guillotine, were soon at work in these cities. Then the army came to Toulon where the ships of the Kings of England and of Spain were riding insolently at anchor.

Napoleon was ordered to proceed to Toulon and take charge of the artillery—for he was one of the comparatively small number of really well-trained artillery officers left in the armies of the Revolution.

Napoleon reached Toulon early in September 1793, and

remained there till the end of the siege, on December 19 of the same year, when, the English and Spanish ships having been driven out of the harbour, the troops of the Revolution entered the town in triumph. It was his first taste of fighting on the great scale, and there is no doubt that he fought well. It is merely foolish to say, however, that it was his genius which conquered Toulon. His genius, on this occasion, had no great opportunity—for he was only a junior officer.

His superior officers, though, thought well of him. One of them wrote to the War Council in Paris :

"I cannot find expressions to depict the merit of Bonaparte : much service, as much intelligence, and too much courage—that is a feeble sketch of the virtues of this rare officer."

The words "too much courage" must have pleased the young officer about whom they were written most of all; for this was an independent testimony that he possessed the greatest of all the virtues of a soldier and a patriot. Napoleon had taken any risk to defend the Revolution, which had become, for him, in truth, his home and his native land, Corsica and France, united together. He had played the Spartan, and eaten again the soldiers' bread of his boyhood. And his courage and skill had helped to bring defeat and disaster on the ships of the King of England which, at that very moment, thanks to the treachery of Paoli, were oppressing his beloved Corsica! With every shot which his battery fired the young officer had hurled, at the English conquerors of Corsica, the would-be conquerors of the French Revolution, his hate and his scorn. Incidentally he received in the thigh a severe bayonet wound from an English soldier during the siege.

The War Council in Paris kept representatives of its own with all its armies at this time—for no one could be trusted absolutely. Saliceti, the Corsican, happened to be one of the representatives sent to accompany the army at Toulon. He was delighted at the success of his young friend, Napoleon, whose family had sacrificed so much

out of loyalty to the Revolution, and he recommended that Napoleon should be promoted.

On December 21, 1793, at the age of twenty-four, Napoleon became a Brigadier-General.

This was not by any means an unheard-of piece of success. The French armies at that time were full of generals under the age of twenty-five. But the new post carried with it pay at the rate of £500 a year. Now Napoleon could give some really substantial help to his mother. Without a moment's delay he went to Marseilles, where his family were staying, and saw to it that the woman whom, above all others, he loved and venerated, was placed in comfort. That done he addressed himself to his new work of " Inspector of the Coast "—a post conferred on him after his promotion. He obtained leave, too, to appoint his brother Louis, then sixteen years of age, his aide-de-camp, and thus relieved his mother of another burden. He was soon ordered to join the Army of Italy as Commander of Artillery.

His old friend Saliceti was, again, one of the three representatives of the War Council attached to this army —having come to Nice, where the headquarters were situated, after leaving Toulon. The other two representatives were Ricord and Augustin Robespierre, the younger brother of Maximilian the great Robespierre. The year 1794 had begun and already the War Council in Paris was full of internal quarrels. The power of mighty Danton, who had made the War Council, who had sent King Louis to the guillotine, whose hands were red with the blood of the massacred victims of September 1792, had begun to decline. Danton, it was said, was not the man he had been. Blood and iron were his weapons no longer; he was growing tender-hearted. He had withdrawn himself from the great work of saving France. The men of blood and iron to-day were Robespierre and Carnot—Robespierre for civilian affairs and Carnot for the armies. Robespierre—so the news ran—meant to trample every opponent under his feet.

Robespierre's younger brother, therefore, was, at that

moment, one of the most powerful men in France. Napoleon soon found that he was also one of the most intelligent men he had ever met. Augustin Robespierre believed, as Napoleon believed, that the real spirit of the Revolution and of the common people of France was the spirit of " soldiers' bread," the spirit of " self-control " in a moral as well as in a political sense. France must learn discipline and self-restraint. King Mob must go to the guillotine as well as King Louis, and after that, while the countryfolk tilled their fields and the townspeople learned to lead sober, frugal lives, the armies must thrust back the forces of all the Kings now threatening France with ruin.

The Nation, so the creed of the Robespierres ran, must work together for a single purpose—the " home front " as well as the front of battle.

These were exactly Napoleon's ideas, and he told Augustin Robespierre so. He added that, in his opinion, it would not be enough merely to clear France of the Kings and their soldiers; it would be necessary, if permanent safety was to be won, to defeat the Kings and, by invading their countries, to force them to make surrender. Napoleon submitted to Augustin Robespierre plans, which he had drawn up, for carrying the Army of Italy into the enemy's country.

These plans, as the world was to learn, were the work of the greatest military genius the world has ever known. Young Robespierre seems to have recognized their merit, because, on April 5, 1794, he wrote to his brother in Paris and told him about his new friend—a man " of a transcendent merit." He added:

" Bonaparte is a Corsican; he can offer only the guarantee of a man of that nation who has resisted the blandishments of Paoli and whose estates have been ravaged by that traitor."

The great Robespierre, when he got that letter, had already sent King Mob, in the person of the vile Hebert, the drowner, to the guillotine. He had followed that daring action by turning against, and destroying, the

mighty Danton. And now his jealous eyes were actually cast in secret hate on his colleague Carnot, the controller of the armies. Napoleon's plans for invading Italy exactly suited Robespierre's own ideas. For whereas Robespierre thought that France should carry the war into the lands of her foes, Carnot held that the war should stop on the frontiers once the foes had been driven across them.

Carnot and Robespierre had been at variance on this subject for some time. But when, on April 6, 1794, as the sun was setting over Paris, great Danton stood—a mighty silhouette—on the platform of the guillotine and gave his head to the knife, there was none that cared to question the word of Robespierre, who had sent Danton to his death. Napoleon's plans were approved.

Already they had been put into operation. The French Army had advanced through the Alps and won immediate victory and the soldiers of the Kings were beginning to fall away before it. Before the middle of May the plains of Italy lay exposed to invasion. The French Army, still under the guidance of Napoleon's plan, and with Napoleon in command of its guns, prepared to reap the fruit of its success. The enemy already gave himself up for lost, when, suddenly, a courier arrived from Paris, from Carnot, with an order that the French Army should not advance.

"France," said Carnot, "must make no conquests except those which are necessary to her liberty."

When Augustin Robespierre saw that order—which was instantly obeyed—he realized that something must have gone wrong with his brother's power and position. Even a month earlier Carnot had not, apparently, been able to oppose Robespierre.

Napoleon was not surprised; for though he cherished a real affection for Augustin, his friend, the latest doings of Augustin's brother in Paris had horrified him as they had horrified all France. The "Reign of Terror," which had begun immediately after Danton's execution on April 6, was at its height, and Robespierre was the author of the Reign of Terror. Not in Paris only, but throughout

all France, the horrible red carts went now, unceasingly, and in vastly increased numbers, between the prisons and the guillotine, bearing to their death hundreds of men and women, good citizens, whose only fault was that they were displeasing to Robespierre or his supporters. Not in all the five years, since the beginning of the Revolution, had there been witnessed so tremendous and so cold-blooded a slaughter. Every one—even the most ardent of patriots—shuddered, knowing that a policy such as this must bring ruin. For the September massacres of Danton, for the trial of King Louis and his death there had been reason. These horrors had struck the hearts of traitors with fear. There had been reason, too, for the slaughter of the Girondists, the "Dreamers," and for the execution of Hebert, the courtier of King Mob, and perhaps even for the execution of Danton. (For there is no doubt that the heart of that awful man had grown sick.) But now, when, north, south, east, and west, the armies of the Revolution were actually beginning to drive back the armies of the Kings, the need for blood and iron was less. And yet, as the need grew less, the cruelty increased a hundredfold. It was said that an immense trench had recently been dug to carry away quickly, from the guillotine in Paris, the torrents of blood which that guillotine was daily and hourly spilling.

To-morrow, or the next day, the stomach of France was bound to turn.

It is probable that Napoleon expressed these views to Augustin Robespierre—nobody else, among those who surrounded that young man, would have dared to speak plainly—for very soon Robespierre's brother made up his mind to go to Paris. He proposed that Napoleon should accompany him and promised that he would obtain for his friend the post of Commander of the Paris Garrison.

No more brilliant offer could have been imagined. But Napoleon could not bring himself to serve and support the man who had made, and was still carrying on, the Reign of Terror. His mother and brothers and sisters

had moved from Marseilles to a village near Nice, and he went to see them. Lucien relates that :

" Napoleon came over one day more thoughtful than usual, and walking between Joseph and me announced to us that it depended only upon him to start for Paris next day in such a position as would enable him to settle all of us advantageously. For my part I was enchanted. To reach the capital seemed to me a good which outweighed every other consideration.

" ' I have been offered,' said Napoleon, ' Henriot's post [Commandant of the Paris Garrison]. I must give my answer to-night. What do you say ? '

" We hesitated a moment.

" ' Well,' continued Napoleon, ' it's a matter to think about. It will not be so easy to keep one's head on one's shoulders at Paris as at Saint Maximin [where Lucien had lost his head and behaved with wild excitement]. Young Robespierre is honest, but his brother will stand no nonsense. He *will* be served. And I—shall I support that man ? No ; never ! ' "

Augustin Robespierre went off alone to Paris the next day—June 30, 1794. He carried with him a new plan of Napoleon's for a further advance of the French Army and also a report : " *On the political position of our armies of Italy and Spain.*" Augustin gave this new plan to his brother, and it was shown to the War Council on July 19. The great Robespierre approved of it ; but Carnot disapproved, because Napoleon's plan meant carrying the war into the enemy's country. Robespierre was still strong enough to carry his point, and a messenger was sent off to Nice to order that the plan should be carried out. A week later Robespierre, the Man of the Terror, that sour, neat tiger, with his sky-blue coat and his nankeen breeches, his powdered wig and his squeaky voice, came to the end of his reign. He was howled down in that Parliament which he had ruled so long ; he was hunted through Paris, and at last, broken and bleeding, a sorry and a cringing wreck, he went the way along which he had sent so many thousands.

Paris had watched, in agonized silence, the red cart go by which carried Danton to the guillotine; but when the red cart which carried Robespierre, with his bandaged face and his broken jaw and his sky-blue coat all dabbled with his blood, went by, Paris howled with hate. Sanson, the executioner only eighteen months before of King Louis, and, only nine months before, of Queen Marie Antoinette, the executioner of Madame Roland and the Girondists, of Hebert, of Danton and his company—the last but four months ago—made short work of Robespierre and his brother Augustin and the beautiful St. Just and all their friends.

*The Reign of Terror was at an end.*

But on that 28th of July 1794 France did not realize that the Reign of Terror was at an end. On the contrary, everybody supposed that the Revolution would go on, as before, devouring its own children. Since Carnot and the horrible Fouché—the man with the sheep's face—had triumphed over Robespierre and his friends, it was only reasonable to suppose that Carnot would pursue the same policy as Robespierre had pursued.

That was the view which everybody at the head-quarters of the Army of Italy took when, on August 5, the news of the execution of Robespierre and his brother and all their friends arrived. Robespierre, it was realized with a thrill of terror, must have had Napoleon's plans of campaign in his hands almost at the moment of his fall—for who else before Robespierre's fall would have dared to give the order, already received, to carry these plans out? Thus, Carnot, one of the destroyers of Robespierre, Carnot, the man who believed in "going slow," must have his eyes already set in anger on Napoleon, the soldier who desired to go quickly.

In an instant Napoleon found himself a leper even among his friends. The terror of the guillotine was in every face into which he looked.

Saliceti, the Corsican, the old friend of the Bonapartes, was no exception to this rule. His courage ebbed out of

his boots as he thought that he, too, had been Augustin Robespierre's friend and that it was he, himself, who had obtained for Napoleon the post he now held. He could almost feel the knife on his throat. His fear made a craven and a traitor of him. Instead of being welcomed with eagerness, Napoleon—who had just returned from a special mission, as an intelligence officer, to Genoa—was received with chilling silence. No one wished to be seen talking to him. No one wished to know him. And, as the days passed, the terror increased : at any moment the fury of Carnot might be vented on the young officer and his friends. At last cowardice could endure the strain no longer. Utterly demoralized, Saliceti and his fellow commissioners decided to arrest Napoleon (along with his superior officer) in the hope that this action might prove to Carnot that they were not Napoleon's friends.

There are few more contemptible episodes in history than this one. Saliceti actually denounced his young fellow-countryman to Carnot—believing, undoubtedly, that he was sending the young man to the guillotine. Napoleon, on August 9, 1794, found himself lodged in the gaol at Antibes, a prisoner under suspicion, and with the prospect of an early journey in one of the red carts before his eyes.

Even so, he does not seem to have been afraid. He wrote to Saliceti :

" If the wicked desire my life I will give it them willingly, I care for it so little and have so often despised it. The thought that it may yet be of use to my country helps me to bear the burden of it with courage."

And when his young aides-de-camp, Junot, Sebastiani, and Marmont, made a plan for his escape, and managed to let him know about it, Napoleon answered :

" I fully recognize your friendship, my dear Junot, in the proposition you make me. . . . Men may be unjust towards me, but for me my innocence is sufficient—my conscience is the tribunal before which I summon my conduct. This conscience is calm when I question it. Do nothing, therefore ; you would compromise me."

A few days later news arrived that the Reign of Terror was indeed over. It had died with Robespierre, and because every one was sick to death of bloodshed and the guillotine, no one wished to bring it back to life. Carnot was not, therefore, to be feared.

The cowards now took courage. They invented some reason to cover their shame and released Napoleon on August 22. He hurried to see his mother, who was living near his prison and learned that his brother Joseph had got married, on August 1, to the daughter of a rich silk manufacturer in Marseilles, Julie Clary. Julie had brought Joseph a dowry of £6,000. Stranger still, Lucien, at the age of nineteen, had changed his name to "Brutus" Bonaparte, and married the daughter of an innkeeper, a girl two years older than himself, who could neither read nor write—an excellent girl nevertheless, said Napoleon's mother.

Napoleon returned to his post with the Army of Italy. Carnot had already ordered this army to "go slow," but, the enemy having attacked, it was necessary to do something. Again Napoleon drew up a plan. It was put into execution and the enemy was hurled back.

Napoleon, at St. Helena, told, against himself, and with shame and regret, a story of this time. It seems that a married woman, the wife of one of the French Commissioners, had fallen in love with the good-looking boy of twenty-four. The boy became infatuated, and consented to take the woman with him to the outposts of the army—that is to say, under fire. He ordered an attack of outposts which succeeded with the loss of a few men. But his conscience, as he confessed twenty-seven years later, never ceased to trouble him, because the attack had not been dictated by purely military motives. He had been showing off before a woman who had turned his head, and his wicked folly had cost human life! This story rests solely on Napoleon's own word. Why he should have confessed his sin I do not know, unless it be that that sin, more than any other of his life, grieved and ashamed him.

Just when a great victory seemed to be at hand a message arrived from Carnot: "*Go slow.*"

Napoleon, immediately after this, received an order to take up the command of the Artillery of an expedition being fitted out in Toulon to try to recover Corsica from the English King. This new post must have filled the heart of the young General with strange enthusiasm, for he knew that Paoli was already in difficulties with the English and that Corsica was, once again, being compelled to kiss hands—in this case English hands—which oppressed her. Alas for his hopes! The ships of England had to be overcome before Corsica could be reached. In spite of the fact that six months had been spent in equipping the expedition, the French Navy was severely beaten as soon as it put to sea; the transports full of troops, which it was escorting, had to make what escape they could. Napoleon and his gunners disembarked again at Toulon, in March 1795, without having fired a shot.

At Toulon, Napoleon learned that, during his absence, the French Army had been reorganized and that 800 officers had been dismissed as incompetent. He was not among these 800. On the contrary, a note had been added to his name on the army list:

"*Has a real understanding of his business.*"

He received new orders to take up the command of the artillery of the army of the West—of La Vendée—that part of France where civil war between the friends of the "Glittering Beings" and the Revolution was now raging. This was a bitter blow to the young General, for he disliked exceedingly the idea of making war against his fellow-countrymen, and, moreover, he had carried out so careful and so prolonged a study of the Italian frontier, where the Army of Italy was still fighting, that he felt that it was sheer folly to remove him from this army. But, soldier-like, he swallowed his feelings and took the coach for Paris.

Before leaving the South, however, he visited Joseph in Marseilles and made the acquaintance of his new sister-in-law. At Joseph's home he met Joseph's wife's

younger sister, Désirée, by whom he was very much attracted. But the fair Désirée, "Désirée the Silent," destined one day to become Queen of Sweden and ancestress of the present Swedish Royal Family, did not return that affection.

Napoleon had last quitted Paris during the awful massacres carried out by Danton, "the Man of September." Then, the men of Blood and Iron, Danton, Robespierre, and Carnot, had been just about to begin their reign by destroying the Government of the "Dreamers." Now, strangely enough, the boot was on the other leg. Exactly eight days before Napoleon's arrival in the capital the small band of the Men of the Terror who had managed to escape the fate of their leader, Robespierre, had made a fresh bid for power against the Government which had sent Robespierre to the guillotine.

This Government, though it contained Carnot, was really another Government of "Dreamers." It spoke of itself as moderate, neither for the "Glittering Beings" nor for the Men of the Terror, and it spoke with reverence of the "Dreamers" whom Danton had destroyed. It was full of good resolutions and weak wills, but there were a few strong men among its members. Its strong men saved it when the Men of the Terror and their mob came marching against it from the gutters and alleys and actually broke into its Parliament House.

Vile women and criminals, along with sincere patriots, cut-throats, butchers, assassins; along with earnest, though ignorant, lovers of the Revolution, had poured, that evening, into the Parliament and threatened to drag the President, Boissy d'Anglas, from his chair. They had actually murdered one of the members of the Parliament. They had shouted, too, for bread and called Boissy d'Anglas "famine d'Anglas." It had been like the march of the women to Versailles over again, and it had lasted all night.

But on the morrow—May 21—the Government got the upper hand. The new "Dreamers," as a whole, were terrified almost out of their wits, but they had plucked up

courage, after the danger was over, and actually sent several batches of prisoners to the guillotine. All members of Parliament who were believed to be friendly to the Men of the Terror were rounded up and punished. Even the great Carnot—because of his past—ceased, for the moment, to count.

These punishments, naturally enough, delighted the friends of the "Glittering Beings" who had suffered so terribly when the Men of the Terror were in power. "Thank God," they cried, "that vengeance and justice have come at last." Many of them added: "*Our turn is near at hand.*" Language of that sort was heard even in the Parliament House; for the real strong men of the Revolution were fallen.

Napoleon's friend Saliceti, who had belonged to Robespierre's party, was among those ordered to be arrested, and was in hiding in Paris in the house of the Permons—the parents of the little girls who had long ago nicknamed Napoleon "Puss in Boots." Saliceti, who had been so ready to betray his friend, was now in abject terror of his own life. Napoleon called at the Permons and happened to meet him on the stairs. Saliceti trembled: would the man whom he had betrayed, betray him in turn? He need have had no anxiety on that score.

But the fall of Saliceti, and this second defeat of the Men of the Terror, left Napoleon without supporters in Paris. Worse still, he was himself, as he soon discovered, associated—in the minds of his official superiors—with the newly-fallen party owing to his connection with Augustin Robespierre. When he called at the War Office to receive his orders he got what was perhaps the greatest rebuff of his life. He learned that he, a General of Artillery, had been appointed to command one of the brigades of Infantry engaged in the Civil War. As the Artillery was, at that time, a "crack" corps and the Infantry a mere object of contempt, no more cruel snub could have been administered.

Napoleon could scarcely believe his ears. There must,

he felt, be some mistake. He begged an interview with the War Minister, Aubry, and pointed out that he was an artillery officer with years of special training and experience behind him. Aubry, a notorious fool, replied :

" You are too young. You must let your elders go first."

" One ages quickly on battlefields," replied Napoleon, " and I have just left one."

Aubry refused to change his absurd decision. Napoleon, whose attacks of fever were still troubling him, at once " went sick "—which the state of his health perfectly entitled him to do. It was pointed out to him that he was running a grave risk of being dismissed from the Army. He didn't care ; he would not be made a fool of—nor see the Revolution cheated of a skilled officer at a moment when it needed every skilled officer it possessed.

As it happened he knew slightly one important person of the new Government—a man whom he had met first during the siege of Toulon. This was " wine-women-and-song " Barras, then a rising light, and a person of some will power. Napoleon called on Barras and told him about the madness which was afoot. Barras hurried to the War Minister and expostulated. He could get no satisfaction beyond a grudging statement that General Bonaparte might stay in Paris for the present—on half pay.

Napoleon wrote to a friend :

" I have been ordered to serve as General of the Line in La Vendée. I will not accept. Many soldiers could direct a brigade better than I, and few have commanded artillery with greater success."

Napoleon knew well what a risk he was running in thus defying authority, and the prospect of losing half of his pay worried him dreadfully, more especially as he had heard that Joseph had just lost his employment and was now living on his wife's money, thanks again to the new Government, and that Lucien had managed, as a consequence of his fiery political speeches and of the fall of the Men of the Terror whom he had consistently supported,

to get himself imprisoned at Aix. Nevertheless he was determined not to give way. He sold various possessions and ruthlessly cut down his expenditure. Then he busied himself on Lucien's behalf and succeeded in getting that hot-headed fellow released. He sent Lucien a sum of money. For himself, once again, he ate soldiers' bread.

Paris, however, was not eating soldiers' bread. The bitterness of death, for the gay capital, was past.

"Luxury, pleasure, and art are once more," wrote Napoleon to Joseph, "taking place here in an astonishing manner. . . . Carriages and smart people begin to reappear, or rather they seem to forget, as one forgets a dream, that they ever ceased to glitter . . . women are everywhere—at the theatres, out driving, at the lectures. . . . The men are mad about them; they think of nothing else and only live by and for them."

That spectacle distressed Napoleon—for it seemed to show that the strong spirit of the Revolution, which he loved, was growing weak. Could it really be that the "Glittering Beings" were going to be restored to their power and the brother of the late King—"Louis XVIII" as he called himself—summoned back to the throne? The young General grew deeply melancholy. He wrote to Joseph:

"If this goes on I shall end it [my life] by no longer turning away when a carriage passes. I am sometimes astonished at myself, but that is an abyss to which I have been brought by the moral spectacle of this country and my familiarity with danger. . . . For my part I am but little attached to life and regard it without great solicitude. . . . Life is a dream which soon vanishes."

These months, June, July, and August 1795, were terrible months for Napoleon, but his stubborn spirit would not yield. He was not going to throw away all his special training and take on a job he could not perform. He wandered about the hot streets of Paris in a kind of dull despair. His clothes grew shabby and he took to

wearing his old hat thrust down over his eyes. His hair (it was long to his shoulders, after the fashion of the time, curly and of a bright chestnut colour) was badly powdered. He wore, usually, a shabby iron-grey coat—of the same make as that which, later, was to become a symbol to the world. Gloves had been given up; his boots were worn. To make matters worse his hopes of being loved by Désirée Clary were dashed to the ground. Joseph, in a letter, told him plainly that his sister-in-law did not care for him.

He is a strange spectacle, this Napoleon of the year 1795, who, in less than twelve months was to possess, in Italy, more than the power of a King and who stood then only nine years distant from the greatest throne in the world. He is so dejected, and yet so determined; so scornful of the luxury about him and yet so lonely; so bitterly poor and yet so proud that he refuses help from anybody. . . . Above all, his love of the Revolution and his hatred of the "Glittering Beings" and their friends are so strong as almost to consume him.

The new Government had invented one of the craziest notions which ever entered the minds of men: this was to move Ministers about from one post to another, and one committee to another, every few months—in a kind of political "General Post." The idea was to prevent anybody from getting too strong a grip of anything—and so, perhaps, making of himself a second Robespierre. The system of "General Post" decided that Aubry, the fatuous Minister of War, should go elsewhere. His place—so far as *personnel* was concerned—was taken by a man named Letourneur. Another new man, Pontécoulant, an able and energetic administrator, had been put in charge of military operations.

Pontécoulant soon found that the mess and disorder in the War Office was too great to be cleared up single-handed. Everything was in utter confusion; important papers were missing; urgent demands from Generals in the field had been flung aside and left unanswered. He was in despair; he told Boissy d'Anglas, the President of

the Parliament, that he must get some expert help from a soldier who knew something about the technical side of the work.

"I met yesterday," said Boissy d'Anglas, "a General on half-pay. He has come back from the Army of Italy, and seemed to know all about it. He might give you some good advice."

The suggestion seemed worth acting on. Pontécoulant sent for General Bonaparte. He relates that, in answer to his summons, there came to his room in the Tuileries "a young man with a wan and livid complexion, bowed shoulders and sickly appearance."

Pontécoulant could not remember the young man's name, though he had been told it by Boissy d'Anglas. He listened to Napoleon and then asked him to make a written memorandum of his views. This was merely "a polite way of getting rid of him," for, as Pontécoulant told Boissy d'Anglas the next day, "*Your man seems to be mad.*"

Boissy d'Anglas, who had seen Napoleon since the interview, declared: "He thought you were laughing at him."

Napoleon made a report about the Army of Italy—it was really a second edition of the old plan of campaign for that army which he had given to Augustin Robespierre and which the great Robespierre had approved a few days before he went to the guillotine. He carried this plan to Pontécoulant and left it with his secretary. Pontécoulant read it and began to change his mind about Napoleon's madness. He sent for the young General a second time:

"Would you like to work with me?" he asked.

"Yes," said Napoleon, and at once sat down to the work-table.

Pontécoulant soon found out what sort of an assistant he had obtained. Napoleon worked each night till 3 a.m. and attended all the meetings of the War Committee. He drew up plans; answered questions; examined reports. He became, in a day, the brain of the whole organization. His chief was so pleased, and so bewildered, that he asked the young General what he could do for him.

"I want to be reinstated in the Artillery," said Napoleon.

Pontécoulant went off to Letourneur, the successor of the idiotic Aubry, and the director of *personnel*, and demanded that his assistant's case should be reconsidered.

"No," declared this ex-officer, who, at forty-two years of age, when he took to politics, had not risen above the rank of Captain and who prided himself on being a stern disciplinarian.

Pontécoulant could do no more. Worse still, the system of "General Post" was about to move him off to another job and put this very Letourneur in his place. Napoleon became, automatically, the secretary of the minister who had just refused to reinstate him in the Artillery.

Nevertheless Letourneur, realizing how valuable General Bonaparte was, proposed to retain his services. Napoleon begged to be excused from that honour. He had seen enough of the hopeless muddle of the War Office to sicken him—apart altogether from the grotesque "General Post" system. It appalled and horrified him to think that the splendid armies of the Revolution were under the control of these ever-changing, ignorant, and stupid chiefs. No wonder the "Glittering Beings" were raising their heads again! No wonder the Kings, in arms against France, had good hopes of overcoming her!

Napoleon went to Pontécoulant and asked him to use his influence to get him appointed to a special military mission which was then about to be sent to Turkey—at the request of the Sultan of Turkey. His reason was that the mission was to be staffed entirely from the Artillery. Thus, by a back door, he would return to his beloved guns. He would also, while the mission lasted, secure good pay and so be able the better to help his mother, who had been compelled, once again, to reduce her manner of living. Pontécoulant again spoke for his friend, and this time the appointment was made. An order was now issued relieving "General of Brigade Bonaparte" of his post—

the post he had refused to fill—with the army in La Vendée.

It was September 15. The mission to Turkey was not due to leave for some little time, but there were many details to arrange. Napoleon threw himself with immense enthusiasm into the work of outfitting. He ordered books and instruments and urged the War Office to allow him to take with him various officers of his own choosing—for he was appointed leader of the mission. His request was considered at a meeting of the War Council held on October 1. It was agreed to, subject to the approval of Artillery headquarters. That particular meeting of the War Council had not, however, finished with Napoleon when it agreed to his going to Turkey—though neither he, nor the members of the Council, realized the fact. By some extraordinary mistake, there slipped through—at this same meeting—an order removing the name of General Bonaparte from the active list of officers, "on account of his refusal to take up the post assigned to him"—*i.e.* the post of General of Infantry in La Vendée, of which, a fortnight before, he had been officially relieved and which, in consequence, was no longer vacant.

Here was a Gilbertian situation indeed. Poor Napoleon was the head of a French Military Mission to Turkey; but he was no longer a French officer. And he was no longer a French officer because he had refused to obey an order which, a fortnight before, had been withdrawn in order to allow of his being appointed head of the Military Mission. Once again Muddle and "General Post" between them had resulted in a state of chaos.

Nevertheless the position—though obviously due to error—was serious, as Napoleon saw at once. For, since he was not on the list of officers—since he had been struck off the list—it was quite likely that he would now be told that he could not go to Turkey.

He might, too, fail to get his name restored to the list. The possibility—nay, the probability—of absolute ruin, the ruin of his whole career, stared him in the face.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### IN A SINGLE NIGHT

Napoleon and his plan were on the street because of the hopeless muddle into which the conduct of the War Office had fallen. He knew this—for he had seen the inner workings of the War Office. He was able to realize also into what a feeble state the Revolution itself was coming.

The causes of this feebleness were, he saw, the fact that the Government stood between two ever-present dangers—the outside danger of the Kings and the inside dangers of the "Glittering Beings," the Royalists, on the one side, and of the Men of the Terror on the other side. So long as the Kings threatened the frontiers of France the Men of the Terror and the Royalists would be perpetually in excitement—the Men of the Terror to prevent the Kings from marching into the country, and the Royalists to welcome them and so perhaps regain their own lost power.

Nothing, Napoleon saw, could end that "see-saw" of danger except victory—real smashing victory over the Kings and their armies. Carnot's idea of "Go Slow" was, he realized, fatal and utterly wrong; for to go slow against the Kings meant, sooner or later, either a return of the Men of the Terror with their red carts and their guillotines or else a return of the "Glittering Beings." Victory over the Kings, on the other hand, would rob both the Men of the Terror and the Royalists of their power and their influence; it would give to the spirit of the Revolution, the spirit of freedom and equality and "self-control," a chance to develop itself. Only a soldier,

thought Napoleon, could save the spirit of the Revolution and rescue that spirit from the cruelties and horrors which had become associated with it during the reigns of Danton and Robespierre. *And yet the War Office itself scarcely seemed to know one kind of soldier from another—a gunner from an infantryman!*

Napoleon's depression increased as these ideas pursued each other through his mind. The Revolution, he could see, was staggering. The new Government, in spite of its recent victory over the Men of the Terror, was composed of helpless creatures. They talked beautifully, but they did nothing to curb the luxury and shameless extravagance of Paris. They did not help the poor; they neglected the peasants. No wonder the Royalists were growing more active and more hopeful every day. After all, things could not be worse, and might be better, if a King returned to Versailles.

The Royalists, moreover, had lately been supplied with a new and a powerful means of appealing to the popular sympathy. On June 9, 1795, the poor little son of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had died in the foul and hideous prison into which the Men of the Terror had thrust him. That beautiful and kindly child, robbed of father and mother, and not even allowed to see his sister who was his fellow-prisoner, beaten day and night by his jailer, the ruffian Simon—beaten so that his poor body was black and blue and covered with sores—tormented, roused nightly from his sleep, starved, taunted, terrified, depraved, had at the last lost his reason.

Then tuberculosis had attacked the poor, wasted frame. There were great swellings at the joints; there were ulcers on the body; vermin swarmed on the child's hair. Here was a true story to wring the hearts of all men and all women who possessed hearts capable of being moved—the story of another Holy Innocent whom great numbers of pious Frenchmen during his lifetime thought of as their King—"King Louis XVII." In this October 1795, four months after his death, the martyred boy, the King who had never reigned, had become a figure

of infinite pathos. The Royalists told how, one night, when the loathsome Simon had done beating the little lad, he asked him : " If you became King, what would you do to me ? " And how the little lad had answered—just as his father and his mother had answered on the steps of the guillotine—" I would forgive you."

Napoleon, whose heart had sickened at the Terror and who, because his heart had sickened, had refused to serve Robespierre—"*that man*"—in Paris, realized very clearly how powerful must be the effect on ordinary, decent folk of stories such as this one. Why had not the new Government had the humanity, after Robespierre fell, to treat the poor little prisoner kindly ? Why had they not had the sense to see that kindness to so helpless a victim must now be their own best policy ? Kindness and firmness at home ; the strength and courage of a lion on the frontiers—that ought to have been their policy. But instead, the dying words of a little child—" I would forgive you "—haunted men's ears. Already the Revolution, which had brought freedom and hope to millions of Frenchmen—the simple, honest, hard-working peasantry of France—had become smirched and stained. The honours were no longer with the down-trodden people ; they had passed over to the King and Queen and the martyred boy—to Louis who had prayed for his tormentors ; to the widow, once the splendid Sovereign, mending her rags in her dreadful prison ; to the child murmuring, " I would forgive you."

Worse still, the Royalists could point to the profligacy of the new Government—to the women who " were everywhere and ruled everything." Had Versailles ever exhibited a more shameless spectacle ? Napoleon, under the necessity of trying to get the mistake, which had removed him from the Army, rectified, soon found out that unless he could obtain the ear of one of these women, he had no chance of being listened to. Appointments went by favour, nowadays, not by merit, in this new Paris of the Revolution which, but yesterday, had been so bitter an enemy of all favour.

He knew a few of these women—for his acquaintance, Barras, had invited him to the " At Homes " of the lovely Madame Tallien (the girl whose beauty made every man, who saw it for the first time, gasp). Napoleon knew, as all Paris knew, that Madame Tallien was " wine-women-and-song Barras' " mistress. He was not carried away by her ; he was " not happy with women." His position began to wear a very unpromising look.

Meanwhile, however, King Mob was being roused once again—this time by the Royalists. For King Mob will serve any master who offers him plunder and human blood. On October 3 a great mass of people collected in front of one of the theatres and began to utter threats against the new Government, which, it said, was trying to rob the public of its liberties. The timid Government, towards night, sent some soldiers to disperse the mob, but the torches which the soldiers carried were snatched from their hands and extinguished and the soldiers themselves were driven away.

The Parliament, learning of this, summoned more soldiers from the neighbouring camp of Sablons. On October 4 the trouble got worse. The General in charge of the camp of Sablons, General Menou, did not wish to bring his men to Paris to fire on the mob, and arrived very late and in a very hesitating frame of mind. He received an order to march against the mob, assembled in one of the districts of the city. He obeyed this order, but without real energy. The leaders of the mob, which consisted for the most part of Royalists, were gathered in a convent, and General Menou, having filled the street leading to the convent with his troops, entered the building alone. He demanded that the mob should at once be disarmed. This was refused. The leaders of the mob, however, promised that, if the soldiers were taken away, they would tell their own followers to go home.

General Menou actually agreed to these humiliating terms. He gave the order to his men to retire from the street. That retirement meant, in fact, that the leaders of the mob were masters of the situation. The soldiers

of the new Government, instead of rushing to defend it, had almost, if not quite, gone over to the side of the friends of the "Glittering Beings." They had shown the very utmost reluctance to fire on the Royalists.

Napoleon had gone to the play that night and was seated in a box at the Theatre Feydeau when a friend found him and told him what was happening. Instantly he hurried to the street and made his way towards the convent. He was just in time to see the soldiers of General Menou marching away.

Napoleon knew exactly what that amazing spectacle meant. *It meant that for the moment Royalty had won, and that the Revolution stood in imminent danger of collapse.* Here, before his eyes, was the result of the sad muddle at the War Office, of the policy of "Go Slow" on the frontiers, of the senseless cruelty to the little son of King Louis, of the rule of the profligate women in Paris. The same causes which had destroyed Versailles, six years before, were now, apparently, about to destroy the Revolution.

Napoleon hurried away to the Parliament House and managed to get into the gallery. He wanted to hear and see the effect on the Parliament of the news that its troops had forsaken it and gone over to its enemies. He saw exactly what he expected—uproar, confusion, terror, and rage, the spectacle of men taken by surprise, of other men secretly overjoyed that their plans were succeeding and that their hour of triumph was about to arrive—for the "Glittering Beings" had many friends in the Parliament. When the first excitement died down a little, it was proposed and carried that Barras, Napoleon's acquaintance, who had commanded the Paris troops on the day of Robespierre's downfall, should be placed at the head of the troops instead of General Menou. General Menou, it was declared, was evidently a traitor to the Revolution and must instantly be removed from his post.

Napoleon left the Parliament House and walked back to his lodging. He had scarcely arrived there before one of his friends came to tell him that Barras wanted to see

him at once. He hurried off with this friend and was introduced to the presence of the new commander.

"We need an artillery officer," Barras said. "I offer you the post of Second-in-Command to myself."

Napoleon, who was dressed in the "grey coat of history," was so overwhelmed that for a moment he remained speechless. He was both timid-looking and bashful.

"I give you three minutes to think it over," Barras remarked sharply.

They stood facing one another. At last the young General said:

"I accept, but I warn you that, once my sword is out of its scabbard, I shall not replace it till I have established order."

It was one o'clock in the morning of October 5, 1795—the 13th Vendémaire according to the grotesque Calendar of the Revolution—and, already, the victorious mob of Royalists was making ready to crush the Parliament. Napoleon decided that all that was possible now was to defend the Parliament House—which was situated in the King's Palace—against the mob—exactly what King Louis had failed to do on August 10, 1792, three years before. His next thought was: Guns. Where were the guns? How could he get them?

He rushed away to visit General Menou in the prison to which that unfortunate man had just been conducted.

"How many guns have you at the camp at Sablons?" he asked.

He got the information he wanted. A few minutes later he ordered Murat, a cavalry officer, to gallop at the head of 300 horse to Sablons and bring these guns to Paris. The order was given not a moment too soon, for the Royalists had also learned about these guns and had also sent off to secure them. Napoleon's men arrived at the same time as the Royalists. Murat managed to seize the guns before his enemies reached them. He yoked horses to them and thundered back with them to Paris.

Napoleon meanwhile had completed his plan of action. All told, and including police, he had available about

8,000 men. He posted them in every street leading to the Parliament House. He got a large supply of food into the Palace, and a large supply of ammunition; and he made arrangements to have hospital beds prepared for the wounded. He also prepared a line of retreat—in case his forces should be overwhelmed. Then he placed his forty guns and gave strict orders that his men were not to fire unless, first of all, they were attacked.

There was no attack until four o'clock in the afternoon. Then firing began. Napoleon at once sent a supply of musketry and ammunition into the Parliament House itself and told the members of Parliament to arm themselves. That action revealed the full extent of the danger.

The Parliament remained seated, in dead silence, while the battle began in the gardens and streets outside. Napoleon had a horse waiting for him in the courtyard of the Palace—that is, of the Parliament House; he mounted it and rode out to one of his batteries, which was just about to be attacked by the enemy. Napoleon ordered the battery to open fire at once.

Ten minutes later he had swept clear the whole street, the Rue St. Honoré, that thoroughfare in which Robespierre had had his modest home and along which, invariably, the red carts had travelled to the guillotine.

The Royalists were not, however, dismayed. Since they could not reach the Palace along the streets, they resolved to reach it from the other side, by the bridges over the Seine. Napoleon had foreseen that move. He had placed several batteries of guns in positions to command the bridges. Eight thousand men came marching along the quays and began to cross the bridges. They were allowed to advance for a few moments without opposition. Suddenly Napoleon, who was standing at the point of danger, gave the order to fire. Grapeshot—that famous "whiff of grapeshot"—smote the enemy in front; grapeshot smote him from the side. He reeled and broke. Indescribable confusion and panic seized his ranks. The bridges, in an instant, were abandoned. The assailants of the Parliament were hurled back to their streets.

It was six o'clock. In less than an hour and a half Napoleon had defeated the Royalists and saved the Parliament and the Revolution.

He rode through the streets directing his men in the work of following up their victory. The next morning, October 6, the last flickers of resistance were extinguished. The Revolution reigned supreme. And all this had been accomplished with but little bloodshed. Napoleon was the hero of the hour. Barras, indeed, told the Parliament :

" It is General Bonaparte whose prompt and skilful dispositions have saved this Assembly."

The Parliament called Napoleon before it and thanked him publicly. That same day his name was restored to the list of officers and he was promoted to the rank of General of Division. On October 26, three weeks later, he became General-in-Chief of the Army of the Interior and took up his abode at the headquarters of that army in the Rue des Capucines. He appointed to his staff his old friends of the Army of Italy, Junot and Marmont, and also his brother Louis. For secretary he chose his step-uncle, young Fesch, Grandmamma Fesch's son by her second husband.

In a single night Napoleon had become famous. He had won his fame, too, by saving the Revolution from the " Glittering Beings," from the men whose hands had oppressed his native island. In addition he had taught King Mob that the days of his power in the good city of Paris were ended. Here is his own account of his action :

" The news was very bad. They [the Members of Parliament] then put the matter in my hands and set to discussing whether they had the right to repel force by force.

" ' Do you intend to wait,' said I, ' until the populace gives you permission to fire at it ? ' . . .

" On that I left ' the lawyers ' [Members of Parliament] to drown themselves in their own flood of words and got the troops on the move."

## CHAPTER XXXII

### IN LOVE

Napoleon had plucked from the Royalists the victory which had already seemed to belong to them. From that hour the hatred of the Men of Versailles was assured to him and the hatred also of the Kings, whose hopes had risen high in these last months. This General Bonaparte, with his cannon, had upset everything.

General Bonaparte, meanwhile, went to the War Office and begged that Menou, the hesitating soldier who had so nearly ruined everything, might be released from prison and acquitted of the charge of treason. This was granted. Then he wrote to Joseph to say that Lucien had been appointed a Commissioner with the Army of the Rhine, and added :

" I have sent the family [his mother and sisters] about £2,500. You need not therefore be uneasy about them. I am still very pleased with Louis, he is my captain aide-de-camp. . . . Jerome is at College, where he is learning mathematics, Latin, and drawing."

Napoleon was now really well off. In the very moment of his prosperity he had sent off a large sum of money to his mother and had, in addition, for his mother's sake, provided for all his younger brothers. His new post, one of very great responsibility, made him a big public figure, and he was, of course, overwhelmed with invitations. He accepted few of these, for he heartily disapproved of the reign of the women and the ever-growing love of gambling. But he made an exception in the case of invitations to the house of Madame Tallien—for he had already met there a young widow who had interested him profoundly.

This lady, " the Citizeness Beauharnais "—to call her by the absurd title then given to her—was the daughter of a planter in the West Indies who, before the Revolution, had married a French nobleman, the Viscount de Beauharnais. Her husband had been employed at Versailles at the Court of King Louis, and, consequently, Josephine had moved in the great world of the past, where her girlish beauty had won her much flattery and attention. When the Revolution began, the Viscount de Beauharnais declared for the Parliament and fought in the ranks of the Revolutionary armies. But, in spite of that service, Robespierre threw him, and his wife also, into prison. The Viscount went to the guillotine. The Viscountess had been doomed to travel likewise in the red carts; but Robespierre's death saved her. She had emerged from prison, with her two young children, utterly destitute.

In these circumstances Josephine did what many other pretty young women who had lost their means of livelihood did at that time: she attached herself to one of the leaders of the Parliament. In this case it was Barras —" wine-women-and-song Barras," the man who had chosen Napoleon to defend the Parliament—who was selected as protector. Barras got back for Josephine a part of her husband's property; and then he grew tired of her, because Madame Tallien had turned his head. The pretty widow, now thirty-two years of age, began to feel her position a difficult and precarious one. She set about looking for a fresh protector. And, in all the drawing-rooms she visited, she told people that it had been prophesied about her, as a girl, by an old negress on her father's plantation, that, some day, she would be Queen of France: " though I am not to die Queen." That story amused immensely the good Republicans of the year 1795.

It often happens that young men of twenty-six fall in love with women of thirty-two, and this is the more likely to happen when the young man has strict ideas and the woman lacks them. For the eyes of " plain living " are singularly blind when passion clouds them. Napoleon fell madly—there is no exaggeration in the word—in love

with Josephine. "To judge by appearances," said a woman who saw them together in Madame Tallien's drawing-room, "it was his first passion and he felt it with all the energy of his character."

Josephine seems at first to have been rather amused. She had had love made to her since her girlhood—and by the most famous lovers of the world. The gayest of the "Glittering Beings," themselves, had bowed over her white hand in the Gallery of Apollo at Versailles, and, since the fall of Robespierre, the leaders of Revolutionary France had paid court to her. Beside these masters of the art of gallantry this solemn, love-sick boy must have cut but a sorry figure.

Amusement, however, could not continue in face of the all-consuming devotion of Napoleon. Josephine passed from smiles to worry. The little General actually wanted to marry her; and to marry her at once too. It was really tiresome. And yet, was he not everywhere spoken of as the coming man, the Saviour of the Revolution? She wrote to a friend:

"You have seen General Bonaparte at my house. Well, it is he who is good enough to wish to act as step-father to the orphans of Alexander de Beauharnais, as husband to his widow! 'Do you love him?' you ask me. No, I do not! 'Then you dislike him?' No, but my state is one of tepidity towards him, that is displeasing to me and which, from a religious point of view, would shock good people more than anything else.

"Barras assures me that, if I marry the General, he will obtain for him the command in Italy. Yesterday Bonaparte was talking to me about the favour, which is already causing some of his brothers-in-arms to grumble, although it has not yet been granted. 'Do they imagine,' he said, 'that I need protection in order to rise? They will be only too glad when I accord them mine. My sword is by my side and with that I will do anything.'

"I do not know how it is, but, sometimes, this ridiculous assurance gains upon me to such an extent as to make me believe possible all that the man suggests to me; and with his imagination who can tell what he may not attempt?"

Napoleon wrote in a different fashion :

" Sweet and incomparable Josephine, what is this curious effect you have upon my heart ? If you are angry, sad or ill at ease my heart is broken and I have no rest ; but can I have any when, giving myself up to the profound sentiment that governs me, I draw from your lips, from your heart, a flame that scorches me ! . . . A million kisses ; but give me none, for they set my blood on fire."

I have often pictured the beautiful, lazy, blue-eyed Josephine, with her mop of chestnut curls, receiving this letter from her little soldier, and then allowing her good-humoured, indolent mind to go straying back to the galleries and the gardens of Versailles. Poor little soldier !

In January 1796 Napoleon formally proposed to Josephine. He was accepted and the engagement was announced. Even so, however, Josephine had her moments of doubt. One day, while her fiancé was with her, she actually called on her lawyer to ask his advice. She left Napoleon in the ante-room but omitted to shut the door of this apartment behind her, when she passed into Raquideau's private room. Napoleon heard Raquideau, the lawyer, exclaim in loud tones :

" What ! Marry a man with nothing but his sword and his uniform, who owns at most a little house ! An unknown General, without a name, without a future, below all the great Generals of the Republic ! Much better marry a shopkeeper ! "

Napoleon pretended that he had not heard. But he made up his mind to have his revenge on that lawyer. Eight years later, one evening, Raquideau was summoned to attend the Emperor Napoleon at the Palace of the Tuileries.

" I have sent for you," said the Emperor, " to give you this ticket for a front place in the Cathedral to-morrow [the day of Napoleon's coronation], so that you may be able to see clearly to what the unknown General has brought your client."

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### ACCORDING TO PLAN

Once more there had been a change in the type of Government. The Government Napoleon had saved, with its multitudes of committees, had given place to what was called a Directory—one committee. This was, in a sense at any rate, a return to the War Council of Robespierre's day—though not to the methods and manners of that Council. Barras was one of the five Directors—the Big Five—Carnot, whose star had risen again, was another. They set about trying to pull things together, and one of their first cares was to find a General to command the Army of Italy, the army whose headquarters were at Nice, the army which had never had a success since Napoleon and his plan of campaign were taken away from it.

The Big Five had three names before them for this post. Carnot, who began to see that his policy of "Go Slow" was not a good policy, proposed the name of Napoleon whose plan of campaign he had not forgotten. Barras seconded this name and one of the other Directors supported it. The fourth Director proposed Bernadotte, the man who was destined to marry Désirée Clary, Joseph's sister-in-law, and to become King of Sweden. The fifth Director proposed another name. So Napoleon was appointed by a majority.

It was February 23, 1796. Napoleon fixed the date of his marriage to Josephine for March 9. The wedding took place on that day at ten o'clock at night and was performed by the Mayor of the district, who went to sleep before the bridal party arrived and had to be roused up by the bridegroom. Barras and Tallien, the husband of

Madame Tallien, were witnesses. There was no honeymoon.

Two days later, on March 11, Napoleon started out, in a post-chaise, for Marseilles to take over his new command. He had the famous plan of campaign in his pocket—that plan which Robespierre had read almost on the steps of the guillotine, and which Carnot had turned down, that plan which had earned for its author the suspicion of being a madman, that plan which, at last, had secured him the leadership of a great army. From that hour, Napoleon never again lost the supreme command.

His heart, though, was heavy ; for his love of Josephine was greater than ever and his agony at parting from her prostrated him.

" Every instant takes me farther from you," he wrote, while the horses of his carriage were being changed, " adorable creature, and every instant I feel less that I can bear being separated from you. I rack my brains to imagine what you are about."

He need not have done that had he been anything at all of a man of the world. Josephine, as any man of the world could have told him was inevitable in her case, was busy amusing herself with other men.

" Oh, be not gay," wrote the simple fellow, " but rather somewhat melancholy, and, above all, may your soul be exempt from grief as your body from illness."

As well urge upon a cat : " Be not fond of the fire." Josephine did not hide her relief to be quit of her little soldier who was so annoyingly impetuous. She hoped the campaign in Italy, about which she was so dreadfully tired of hearing, would last a very long time.

Her husband had other ideas. He knew that everything — absolutely everything — depended on speedy results, and this not for his own sake alone, not even chiefly for his own sake, but for the sake of the Revolution. For, in truth, having saved the Revolution in Paris by his " whiff of grape-shot," Napoleon had set before him the aim of saving it also on the frontiers.

He knew his problem, this mathematician, down to the last point. He saw that, as things stood, France was exactly in the position of a besieged town. France was surrounded by a wall of steel both on the land and on the seas, where the ships of the King of England blockaded every one of her ports. Unless this wall of steel could be pierced, or, better still, thrown down, the Revolution must, in the long run, be destroyed. For food tends to grow scarce—it was scarce already—in a besieged city, and trade and industry are heavily hampered. Money, too, is needed in such large amounts to keep and feed the armies, that ruin continuously threatens.

These are the very conditions in which King Mob lifts up his head. These are the conditions in which parties and factions flourish. To-day it would be the Men of the Terror; and then, to-morrow, the Royalists. Of good government and freedom there could be none—for shocks and alarms, the fear of invasion, the fear of famine, the fear of ruin, would everlastingly follow each other. The wall of steel, then, must be pierced, and it must be pierced quickly. Napoleon by this time knew his Government and his War Office; he knew his Paris. He knew that, though Carnot had, for the moment, given up his policy of "Go Slow," he would probably return to it again. He knew that Barras, the vain, good-natured swashbuckler, would never associate himself with an unpopular cause. He knew that, even now, as his carriage bore him southwards through the scenes of his youthful labours and privations—Lyons, Valence—a fresh outbreak was being planned, in the clubs and cafés, by the Men of the Terror and that Paris was full of spies and agents of the Royalists.

Unless he could, almost at one blow, strike down the wall of steel and put to rout the armies of the Kings, the Revolution would, very likely, take a new turn; and every change now, as he clearly saw,—a change back to the red carts and the guillotine or a change in the direction of the "Glittering Beings"—led straight to Versailles. Even Paris would grow sick of change; men would cry

out for peace and rest and the fruit of their labours. In that day the Kings, who were anxiously awaiting that day, would proclaim : " We will make peace with your rightful King. Call him back to rule over you and your troubles will be at an end."

But last, and not least, it was necessary to the salvation of the Revolution that the soldier, who should cast down the wall of steel, should be free to develop and complete his victory. He must not be interfered with ; his decisions must not be subject to control exercised in Paris. Napoleon knew that, in order to obtain this vital necessity of a free hand, it was essential to carry public opinion with him —not the violent passion of King Mob, but the enthusiasm of the mass of the people, of the intelligent townsmen and the hard-working peasants. These folk loved the Revolution just as he himself loved it. They believed in it, just as he himself believed in it. They were proud of it, just as he himself was proud of it. Yet what had they had on which to sustain their love and faith and pride ? At the best only material advantages ; at the worst cruelty and horror, the red carts and the guillotine, the shoutings, the drownings, the hangings—the awful junketings of King Mob.

Napoleon, as he drove to Marseilles, resolved that the blow he was going to strike against the wall of steel should be swift and terrible. He resolved also that every lover of the Revolution in France should share the thrill and glory of that blow and be in a position to realize its meaning, both for the present and for the future. Already, in his great plan, provision had been made for securing the " home-front " as well as the front of battle.

The would-be saviour of the Revolution, the Man with the Plan, arrived in Marseilles and at once hurried to embrace his beloved mother. Letitia lived in comfort now, but Napoleon assured her that better things were to come. Perhaps he repeated the remark he had made to a friend before he left Paris :

" In three months I will be either at Milan or Paris " —that is, victorious or ruined and recalled.

He reached Nice, his headquarters, on March 27, and found a shock awaiting him. The so-called "Army of Italy" was little better than a band of ragamuffins. How it had deteriorated since last he saw it! As much as had his Corsican Volunteers after Paoli turned his back on them. So much for the War Office in Paris! The staff officers included Massena, Augereau, the big ex-fencing master, and Berthier. They looked coldly on "this stripling" who had come to command them. What sort of a child was this to set over grown men? Augereau, who seems to have felt like Goliath of Gath in the presence of the stripling David, related that he was disgusted until something in the thin, pale, girlish-looking lad's eye caught his attention. Then he experienced the sense of having been quelled.

The army consisted of about 30,000 men. These men were in the utmost distress. They were clothed in rags, many of them were barefooted, none of them had received any pay for months. They lived as best they might—usually by stealing or raiding—but they bore their sorrows bravely: were they not fighting for the Revolution? The Man with the Plan addressed them:

"Soldiers," he said, "you are ill-fed and almost naked. The Government owes you much, but can do nothing for you. Your patience, your courage do you honour but procure you neither glory nor advantage. I am going to lead you into the most fertile plains in the world; you will there find large cities, rich provinces; you will there find honour, glory, and wealth. Soldiers of Italy, would your courage fail you?"

The Army of Italy, in vulgar phrase, "sat up and rubbed its eyes." For years it had been rotting in this dreary neighbourhood because of Carnot's policy of "Go Slow." Was the time of action really at hand at last? The men shouted for joy. And their joy was not less when, a little later, thanks to an arrangement which Napoleon had made with a contractor, some of the arrears of their pay came to them. Even so, however, there was

scarcely a horse in the whole army—the guns were horseless and everything was in utter confusion. A fine army this to lead against the picked troops of Austria and Sardinia who, in any case, were present in the proportion of two to one!

The Man with the Plan set his teeth. It was Milan or Paris in three months—the Revolution or Versailles. On April 11, 1796—one month after he had left Paris—he gave the order to march. Napoleon's "First Italian Campaign" had begun.

Napoleon's first great love affair, meanwhile, was causing him agonies of apprehension, for Josephine was not answering his letters as warmly as he desired:

"I am not satisfied with your last letter," he wrote on April 7, four days before the campaign began, "it is cold as friendship. I have not found that fire which kindles your looks and which I have sometimes fancied I found there. But how infatuated I am! I found your previous letters weigh too heavily on my mind. The revolution which they produced there invaded my rest and took my faculties captive. I desired more frigid letters, but they gave me the chill of death."

With this chill of death upon him, with his passion burning his soul, the Man completed the details of his Plan. And then he struck. The naked ragamuffins sprang, at his word, at the throats of the soldiers of the Kings: one ragamuffin to every two soldiers.

Italy, as everybody knows, is shaped like a human leg, the knee of which presses upon France. The Alps cross the thigh like a garter. But they are continued also down the front of the leg like a shin-bone. In this latter position they are called the Apennines. Napoleon, in order to reach the plains of Northern Italy—the calf of the leg—must cross the "shin-bone."

The ragamuffins swarmed up the chosen mountain pass—the Pass of Montenotte. The Man stood on a little knoll to watch their progress. As he had expected would happen the enemy—in this case the Austrians—had

mistaken his real intention. The pass was guarded by a relatively small body of troops. The ragamuffins rushed at them and overwhelmed them. As night began to fall the Austrians were defeated and the Man had his first 2,000 prisoners, five guns, and four colours. Two days later, on April 14, his soldiers found their foe—the massed troops of Austria and Sardinia—rallied to receive them among the mountain gorges at Millesimo. This time the number of prisoners was 6,000, including two Generals, thirty-two guns, and fifteen colours. On the following days victories were won at Dego. But greater than these triumphs was the fact that the Austrian Army and the army of the King of Sardinia were now separated from one another. No longer were the odds against Napoleon as two to one.

The Man heard that some of his soldiers had been looting; punishment swift and terrible befell those men. He had seen the heroism of a young officer, Lannes; he made him a Colonel on the field. The army came to the heights and saw, spread before it, the plains of Northern Italy with their great rivers and their mighty girdle of snow and ice—the High Alps. "Look," cried Napoleon, "Hannibal crossed these Alps; we have got round them."

Everything was going "according to plan." But the question now arose whether to follow the Austrians across the "knee"—that is, across Italy—or to turn to the right and attack the army of Piedmont (the army of the King of Sardinia). Napoleon asked the question of his Generals; in fact, he had answered it in his own mind long ago. Before he could safely follow the greater army he must get rid of the lesser.

Swift as the spring of a tiger he turned towards Turin—the capital of the King of Sardinia. Another battle, at Mondovi, on April 22, gave him 3,000 prisoners, eight guns and ten colours. The smaller of the two armies against which he was fighting was out of action after eleven days. The next day the King of Sardinia, a Bourbon and a relation of the Kings of France, hauled down his flag. He had had enough, and wanted to make peace.

Napoleon's officers said that no peace should be given him; was he not a King? But the Man with the Plan knew better. He had no time to spare on trifles; what he wanted was the destruction of the great army of Austria now rallying on the plains in front of him. So long as that army remained undestroyed the wall of steel had not been effectively pierced. So, in spite of his Generals, and without waiting to consult the War Office in Paris on the subject, he made at Cherasco an armistice with the King of Sardinia on condition that three of the great fortresses of that kingdom were handed over to him at once, that all the roads of that kingdom were opened to him, and that the remains of the army of that kingdom were dispersed. The three fortresses contained, as Napoleon knew, food and ammunition, guns and horses.

"Soldiers," cried the Man in a new proclamation, "in a fortnight you have gained six victories, taken twenty-one pairs of colours, fifty-five pieces of cannon, several fortresses, and conquered the richest part of Piedmont; you have made fifteen thousand prisoners and killed or wounded more than ten thousand men; you have hitherto been fighting for barren rocks, rendered glorious by your courage, but useless to the country; you now rival, by your services, the army of Holland and of the Rhine.

"Destitute of everything, you have supplied all your wants. You have gained battles without cannon, crossed rivers without bridges, made forced marches without shoes, bivouacked without brandy and often without bread. The Republican phalanxes, the soldiers of Liberty, alone could have endured what you have endured. Thanks be to you for it, soldiers!

"Your grateful country will owe to you its prosperity; and if your conquest at Toulon foreboded the glorious campaign of 1793, your present victories forebode one still more glorious. The two armies, which so lately attacked you boldly, are fleeing, affrighted before you; the perverse men who laughed at your distress, and rejoiced, in thought, at the triumphs of your enemies, are confounded and trembling.

"But, soldiers, you have done nothing since more

remains to be done. Neither Turin nor Milan is yours. . . . There are said to be among you some whose courage is subsiding and who would prefer returning to the summits of the Apennines and of the Alps. No; I cannot believe it. The conquerors of Montenotte, Dego, and Mondovi are impatient to carry the glory of the French people to distant countries!"

That proclamation was written for the Army of Italy, but not for the Army of Italy only. It was written also for the public of France, for Paris and Lyons and Marseilles, for a thousand towns and hamlets. It spoke to France, glowing in her new-found liberty, but weary to death of horrors and plots and intrigues. It cried to Frenchmen: "See what manner of men you are, you soldiers of liberty. Neither the Kings nor Nature herself, neither famine nor distress, neither hardship nor sword can prevail against you. It is the Revolution, the spirit of freedom which has made you what you are."

The Man had not miscalculated. Exactly what he meant to accomplish that he achieved. Paris and all France thrilled at the sound of his words. For the first time the Revolution had found its sanctuary in public opinion—as opposed to public fury or public excitement.

But Napoleon did not mean to rely only on proclamations. That deep student of men's hearts knew that, always, the symbol is more potent than words, however grandly spoken. He sent the captured colours to Paris in the charge of his aide-de-camp, Junot, that men and women might see them and touch them and, seeing and touching, become partakers of the spirit which they expressed—the spirit of self-sacrifice for country, of self-restraint, of the heroic men and women of Sparta, of all those who, in all ages, have relinquished luxury and ease and become the eaters' of soldiers' bread. He knew that, against these strained and trampled trophies, neither the rage of the Men of the Terror nor the whispered promises of the Royalists would prevail. Against the sentiment which the trophies must arouse the intrigues of enemies,

anxious to defeat the Plan, or to prevent its full execution, would certainly fail. Already, within a fortnight, the "home front" was becoming organized for the victory of the Revolution.

Junot presented the colours to the Directors in Paris at an imposing ceremony. The capital gave itself up to transports of joy.

The Man, meanwhile, was still tortured by his love of Josephine. On April 24, on the day of triumph, he wrote to tell her this and to introduce to her Joseph, who had accompanied him so far but was returning to Paris.

"My brother," he said, "will give you this letter. I have for him the most lively affection. I trust he will obtain yours; he is worthy of it. Nature has endowed him with a gentle, even, and unalterably good disposition; he is made up of good qualities. He wishes to live, with his little wife, far from the great whirlwind and from great events." And then:

"You have been several days without writing to me. What *are* you doing then? Yes, my kind, kind love, I am not jealous, but sometimes uneasy. Come soon. I warn you, if you tarry, you will find me ill. Fatigue and your absence are too much for me at the same time. Your letters make up my daily pleasure and my happy days are not many."

Then he mentions the flags—in seven words—and urges Josephine to come to him with the bearer of them:

"But you are about to come, are you not? . . . But travel gently, the route is long, bad, fatiguing . . . go gently, my beloved."

"What an odd creature Bonaparte is!" said Josephine when she got this letter. Fancy his being so stupid as to think that a pretty woman would wish to leave the drawing-rooms of Paris for a soldier's camp! And especially at a moment when all Paris was calling her "Our Lady of Victory" and when—thanks to the "odd creature"—she had become a popular heroine.

The Man got fewer and fewer letters. He quenched the longings of his heart and turned again to his Plan: the pursuit of the Austrian Army. In this pursuit he would require to march across one of those small states, which at that time were clustered thickly in Northern Italy. Already the Duke of Parma had sent messengers to make terms—the best terms which could be obtained. Napoleon demanded two millions in money, 1,600 horses for his artillery, wheat and oats, hospitals, and finally twenty pictures from the Duke's collection to be chosen by French connoisseurs and sent to Paris. One of the chosen pictures was that of St. Jerome. The Duke of Parma offered a million to save it. His offer was refused.

"This million," said Napoleon, "we should soon spend. . . . A masterpiece is everlasting; it will adorn the country."

Napoleon was perfectly entitled to take his indemnity in pictures instead of money if he chose. It was the Kings, not the Revolution, who had made this war, and there was not one of them who did not levy indemnities when victory crowned his arms. Consequently the complaints of the Kings about the stealing of works of art have no substance. Napoleon did not steal; he levied the usual tribute, just as tribute was levied, and rightly levied, by England and France after the Great War. Nor need it be supposed that his choice of pictures, instead of money, showed a deep passion for art. The truth is that pictures and statues were included in the Plan. They were taken that France might see them, and, seeing them, might enter into the glory of the armies of the Revolution. Other Revolutionary Generals had sent pictures and colours to Paris, from Holland and the Low Countries; but they had not sent them in such a manner as to strike the imagination of the people. Napoleon's proclamations prepared the way for his pictures; his colours and his cannon made the pictures glorious and eloquent in their glory. As from the mouth of a trumpet, he spoke to men's hearts; and it was the actual spirit of the Revolution which spoke to them. Every eye in France was turned to the plains of Northern

Italy where the wall of steel was at last being burst asunder. The next stage of the campaign would have twenty millions of Frenchmen as its witnesses.

That was what Napoleon had striven to achieve, for thus alone, in his view, could the Revolution be saved.

But the Man had another object in view. In his own veins, as in those of so many Corsicans, flowed the blood of Italy. And Italy, as a nation, did not exist. That distracted land was ruled by aliens; it was parcelled up into a host of petty states and principalities. The "hands which oppressed" were, everywhere, raised against the native people who, during centuries, had kissed them.

What a mission to become the Liberator of Italy—a new and a nobler Paoli! What glory to bring to that land of glory the spirit and the liberality of the Revolution, to strike down the hands which oppressed, and in the name of the French people to raise up the fallen nation!

Napoleon did not talk about Italian independence; but he talked and wrote in such a fashion as to lead the minds of his fellow-countrymen towards this splendid ideal. And thus he instilled into their minds a new, apostolic zeal quite different from the frenzy which, in the early days of the Revolution, had caused France to offer her armies to any nation desiring to be free of its King. Let the peoples save themselves from their own Kings; but let oppressed peoples be saved from their alien oppressors!

Austria ruled the greater part of the North of Italy—the "calf" of the leg, the rich plains of Lombardy. And her hand was heavy on the rich plains. Then there was the Republic of Venice, that once-great State, the "Queen of the Adriatic," fallen, now, into indolence and arrogance and weakness. There was Tuscany, too, and then, half-way down the "shin," the states of the Church, ruled by the Pope and domineered over by monks. At the "ankle" the Kingdom of Naples began. On the throne of Naples sat another King of the house of France, a weak and stupid man, very like poor Louis XVI and, like him, married to an Austrian Princess, the sister of Marie Antoinette. The

Government in Paris was eager that Napoleon should march against these various rulers—that is, that he should march down the "leg" towards the ankle.

The Man knew better. All the other French conquerors of Italy had followed this plan and always the same result had ensued: while the conqueror was marching down the "leg" the Austrians had struck at his lines of communication in the neighbourhood of the "knee"—and so forced him to rush back in order to avoid being cut off.

Napoleon made up his mind to march, not down the "leg" towards Rome, but *across* the "leg" towards Milan and Verona and Venice. This would bring him again to the Alps, at the far end of the semicircle which that mighty range of mountains makes round Northern Italy. He proposed to drive the Austrians back over the Alps and pursue them towards Vienna, their capital, on the other side of the great mountains. With that object in view he launched his ragamuffins—fed now and paid, but not clad—towards the River Po. A move, both subtle and bold, enabled him to cross that river at Placentia as it seemed at a stride and to hurl his forces, on the following day, May 8, against those of the Austrian General. Napoleon had less than 30,000 men, the Austrians more than 40,000. Yet the Austrians were routed and left 2,500 prisoners, many guns, and three colours behind them. The road to Milan, that great city, was open.

But the Man was not ready yet to enter Milan. He wished to destroy completely the Austrian Army before it escaped into the passes of the Alps. He wished to get behind the Austrian Army and actually to cut it off from the passes, and so, by depriving it of a way of escape, to force it to surrender. The Bridge of Lodi was the critical spot. If he could reach that before his enemy and hold it, he would achieve his purpose.

He reached the Bridge of Lodi. On the other side of the bridge there were drawn up 12,000 footmen and 4,000 horsemen, the pick of the soldiers of Austria. They had twenty cannon, too, placed so as to command

the bridge, and they had sharp-shooters without number. The Man looked at that formidable array and went forth from the shelter of the village of Lodi to inspect the bridge and the river banks. A hail of bullets and of grape-shot welcomed him and his aides-de-camp, but he heeded it not. He completed his inspection, made his plan, and returned to the village. He passed through the ranks of his army and spoke to the soldiers, exhorting them to the awful task which he wished them to perform, and which—as they had seen—he had himself sampled. His soldiers, watching him as he moved along the river bank among the hail of bullets and the grape-shot, and despite the skill of the sharp-shooters, had held their breaths. This was courage of the sheer, absolute kind which compels all men with irresistible force. "*Little Corporal*" they named him that day in the access of overwhelming pride and love.

The "Little Corporal" gave the order to take the Bridge of Lodi.

"Take it," he cried, "at the double."

The column sprang to obey. The whole head of the column was swept to annihilation. The survivors reeled and rushed forward again. Now they are on the bridge; now across the bridge; now at grips with the gunners on the opposite bank. The footmen are rushing against them, bayonet to bayonet. They, too, are overthrown. . .

The Austrians, however, managed, in spite of all that heroism, to make good their escape. The Man of Lodi had only his prisoners and his twenty captured guns. but he knew in his heart that his Plan was safe.

"It was at Lodi," he said long afterwards, "that I first realized that I might play a really decisive part."

The next day, May 15, Napoleon marched his ragamuffins into the city of Milan. He was a month ahead of the time-table he had given himself when he left Paris.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE GARTER

The Man had not miscalculated. No sooner did news that he had routed the Austrian Army reach Paris than Carnot began to hark back to his policy of "Go Slow." This young General Bonaparte took away the breaths of the five Directors.

And so a messenger was sent off to Napoleon telling him that General Kellermann was to be associated with him. His army was to be divided into two; one part was to remain in Northern Italy under Kellermann, while, with the other part, Napoleon marched to Rome and Naples. Carnot's plan was not Napoleon's plan. The Man saw all the folly of it at a glance—for while he was advancing down the "leg" to Rome, the Austrians would return through the Alps and destroy Kellermann and then he himself would be cut off and destroyed. No wonder the Italians had a proverb: "*Italy is the grave of the French.*" The Man knew that it was now or never with him. Either his proclamations and his pictures had done their work in creating a real public opinion in France on which, in this hour of crisis, he could rely, or they had failed to create that public opinion. In the former case, the Directors would not dare to deprive him of his right to follow up his victory in his own way; in the latter case, victory was lost already, and, with victory, the Revolution itself.

Napoleon wrote to Carnot:

"Kellermann would command the army as well as I; for no one is more convinced than I am of the courage and audacity of the soldiers, but to unite us together would

ruin everything. . . . It is better to have one bad General than two good ones. War is, like government, decided in a great degree by tact."

Napoleon added that, in his opinion, the French ought to follow the Austrians—their really formidable enemy. If the Austrians were defeated, the Pope at Rome and the King of Naples in the " ankle " would soon give way.

Carnot and the other Directors, when they got this letter, realized that they did not dare to refuse. If they allowed General Bonaparte to resign his command, the French nation would, they knew, sweep them away. For the first time a Government of the Revolution bowed before public opinion. The Man, now, had his chance to follow up his victory and utterly break down the wall of steel which he had pierced. He addressed his soldiers :

" Soldiers ! " he cried, " you have rushed like a torrent from the summits of the Apennines ; you have overthrown, dispersed everything that opposed your progress. Piedmont, delivered from Austrian tyranny, has returned to her natural sentiments of peace and friendship for France. Milan is yours and the Republican flag waves throughout all Lombardy. . . .

" These successes have produced joy in the bosom of the country ; your representatives have ordered a festival dedicated to your victories which are celebrated in all the communes of the Republic. There, your fathers, your mothers, your wives, your sisters, your sweethearts are rejoicing in your achievements and boasting with pride that you belong to them. Yes, soldiers, you have done much ; but is there nothing more left for you to do ? Shall it be said of us that we knew how to conquer, but not how to follow up the victory ? But I see you already running to arms. Well, let us set out. We have still forced marches to make, enemies to subdue, laurels to gather, injuries to revenge. Let those who have whetted the daggers of civil war in France, who have basely assassinated our ministers [the Pope's soldiers had done this], who burned our ships in Toulon [the King of Naples had done this], let those tremble ! The hour of vengeance has struck.

"But let not the Italian people be alarmed. We are friends of the people everywhere, more particularly of the descendants of the Brutuses and Scipios, and the great men whom we have taken for our models. To re-establish the Capitol, to set up there, with honour, the statues of the heroes who rendered it celebrated, to rouse the Roman people, stupefied by centuries of slavery—such will be the fruit of our victories. . . .

"The French people, free and respected by the whole world, will give to Europe a glorious peace which will indemnify her for the sacrifices of all kinds that she has been making for the last six years. You will then return to your homes, and your fellow-citizens, pointing to you will say: '*He belonged to the Army of Italy.*'"

There, indeed, spoke the eater of soldiers' bread, the Spartan of Valence and Auxonne, Paoli's man. And the soldiers, to whom the proclamation was addressed, realized the fact. Had they not, with their own eyes, seen the "Little Corporal" go out alone, into that hell of fire at the Bridge of Lodi to inspect the ground and complete his plans? Did they not know with what remorseless severity the Man punished indiscipline and looting? There was one law for all—for the General-in-Chief and for the drummer boy—the law of soldiers' bread. And woe to him who broke it! Woe to the town or village which broke its faith with the Man! Woe to the people who laid hands on his sick or wounded or on his supplies!

The town of Pavia found that out. Lying in the rear of the French Army, it opened its gates to the enemies of that army, nobles and monks and friends of the Austrians. French sick were murdered and the safety of the whole French Army threatened. But the Man, galloping to the scene, forced his way into the town and re-took it. His soldiers shouted for leave to pillage.

"Pavia," said Napoleon at St. Helena, "is the only place I ever gave up to pillage. I had promised it to the soldiers for twenty-four hours; but after three hours I could bear it no longer and put an end to it. Policy and morality are equally opposed to the system. Nothing is so certain to disorganize and completely ruin an army."

The soldiers, in their three hours, looted all the jewellers' shops in the town. A large number of the insurgents were shot. The lesson sufficed. The friends of the Austrians threatened the rear of the French Army no more.

The ragamuffins were ragamuffins no longer. Napoleon had clothed them in Milan. The Army of Italy was beginning to look like an army—like one of the greatest armies which Europe had ever seen. The Man marched it across Lombardy into the lands of the Republic of Venice. In these lands, in the town of Verona, he who now called himself King of France, "Louis XVIII," the brother of poor Louis XVI, was living in exile. Venice tried to play with the Man just as it had always tried to play with the Austrians—and so keep its independence. The Man was not to be played with. He demanded that his troops should be allowed to pass in peace through the Venetian lands, that the town of Verona should be opened to him and that provisions should be supplied. He promised to pay for what he took:

"Let the Republic of Venice furnish my soldiers with what they need," he declared. "She may afterwards settle with the French Republic." He added: "We are not making war on any Government; we are the friends of all those who shall assist us to confine the Austrian power within its proper limits."

"*That Man*," said the Venetians to whom this statement was made, "*will someday have great influence over his country.*"

The Venetians fell in with Napoleon's wishes. The Austrian Army was beaten and driven into the Alps. The army of the ragamuffins had crossed Northern Italy—the "leg"—from sea to sea. Southern Italy—the Pope and the King of Naples—was cut off completely from communication with the Austrians. The French Army, in fact, occupied a position exactly corresponding to that of a garter worn just below the "knee." Austria had been driven back up the "thigh." The wall of steel was not only pierced, it was broken down. The Pope and the

King of Naples trembled on their thrones. For the Pope had publicly cursed the Revolution and preached a crusade against it; and the King of Naples, of the Royal House of France, and the husband of Marie Antoinette's sister, was numbered among its bitterest enemies.

Napoleon knew, though, that he must act quickly. The beaten Austrians were gathering a fresh army on the other side of the Alps, those Alps which garter Italy above the "knee." In a month, at the latest, this huge force would come pouring through the mountain passes to strike at the victorious French Army. And then, if the "garter" should be broken, any French troops which had advanced down the "leg" would be cut off.

But the name of the Man was already stronger than armies. The King of Naples, even before he was attacked, sent messengers of peace, and the Pope, at the first signs of attack, sent messengers also. All the rulers of Italy submitted themselves. They agreed to shut their harbours to the ships of the King of England, to pay indemnities, to supply food and clothing. In twenty days Napoleon had achieved his purpose. He had achieved also a rekindling of the embers of Italian patriotism. When he entered Bologna, one of the towns in the dominions of the Pope, the people welcomed him as a saviour, and soon the flame of liberty spread all over the land. "Bonaparte," cried the millions of oppressed Italians, "has freed us from the foreign yoke of Austria, from the oppression of the Popes, from the Kings and the Princes and the Dukes, who divided us up that they might the more easily devour us." They added: "Is not Bonaparte himself of Italian lineage?" The hands that oppressed, which these Italians had kissed so long, were seen to grow palsied under the glance of Napoleon.

Napoleon carefully fostered that patriotism, for he ardently desired to see a free Italy, as well as a free France, an Italy restored and made glorious by the new, strong spirit of the Revolution. Such a free Italy would, he realized, be another breach in the wall of steel—a breach of vast importance since the ships of the King of England

were accustomed to use all the Italian harbours and, through those harbours, to bring help to the active enemies of the Revolution. The wall of steel by sea was not, as Napoleon knew, a whit less oppressive and dangerous to the French people than the wall of steel by land. Its dangers indeed were, even then, being made evident in Paris. There, the Men of the Terror and the Royalists were still busy trying, each in their own fashion and for their own ends, to destroy the Government. But the news of the victories in Italy and also on the Rhine, the proclamations and the pictures, the money which Napoleon had sent from Italy and the splendid carriage horses, which he had presented to the Directors—all these influenced the mind of France away from intrigues and plots and factions towards liberty and glory. The Plan was saving the people.

The maker of the Plan meanwhile dwelt in anguish, for Josephine ignored him.

"Ah, Josephine," he cried in one of his letters, "had you known my heart, would you have waited from May 18 to June 4 before starting?"

Josephine scarcely deigned to reply, and Napoleon's passionate anxiety burst all bounds. He wrote letter after letter. Why did she not come to him? Did she not know that she was his life?

"Without appetite, without sleep, without care for my friends, for glory, for fatherland, you—you alone. The rest of the world exists no more for me than if it were annihilated. I prize honour since you prize it, I prize victory since it pleases you; without that I should leave everything in order to fling myself at your feet."

The languid lady with the blue eyes began to get a little nervous now. She said she could not come to Italy because she was about to become a mother. That news threw her husband into transports of anxiety and joy and again anxiety. But he began to hear rumours which made him doubt the news. In his bitter mortification he wrote on June 26, just as Italy finally prostrated herself at his feet:

"For a month I have only received from my dear love two letters of three lines each. Is she so busy that writing to her dear love is not then needful for her, nor, consequently, thinking about him? To live without thinking of Josephine would be death and annihilation to your husband. Your image gilds my fancies and enlivens the black and sombre picture of melancholy and grief. A day, perhaps, may come in which I shall see you, for I doubt not you will be still at Paris, and verily on that day I will show you my pockets stuffed with letters that I have not sent you because they are too foolish. Yes, that's the word. Good heavens, tell me, you who know so well how to make others love you without being in love yourself, do you know how to cure me of love? I will give a good price for that remedy.

"You ought to have started on May 24. Being good-natured, I waited till June 1, as if a pretty woman would give up her habits, her friends, both Madame Tallien and a dinner with Barras, and the acting of a new play, and Fortuné; yes, Fortuné, whom you love much more than your husband. . . .

"Every day I count up your misdeeds. I lash myself to fury in order to love you no more. But, don't I love you the more? In fact, my peerless little mother, I will tell you my secret. Set me at defiance, stay at Paris, have lovers—let everybody know it—never write me a monosyllable! Then I shall love you ten times more for it; and it is not folly, a delirious fever! And I shall not get the better of it.

"Oh, would to heaven I could get better! But don't tell me you are ill, don't try to justify yourself. . . . I love you to distraction. . . ."

That letter ends: "We have made peace with Rome—who gives us money."

Josephine set out at last, in tears, and frightened and bewildered by the "odd creature" whom she had married, the "odd creature" who had just written to Joseph in his despair:

"You know my love, you know how ardent it is, you know that I have never loved before, that Josephine is

the first woman I have ever adored . . . oh, my dear brother, see that my courier does not wait more than six hours in Paris, and that he hastens back to restore me to life. . . . I was destined by nature to have nothing brilliant in my life except appearances."

Josephine detested the idea of seeing her husband again. "Her grief was extreme when she saw that there was no means of escape," said a friend. "Poor woman! She burst into tears and sobbed as though she were going to execution." Napoleon met her at Milan. His joy was so great that even his staff, who had heard nothing but her praises, were astonished. The "odd creature" lived only for her, his love was so abounding that it sufficed for both. But already, in the gay city of Milan, Josephine's blue eyes had found new admirers. She heaved a sigh of relief when, early in July, the Man was compelled to leave her because a new Austrian Army was marching through the mountains to attack him. The Serbelloni palace at Milan was bearable, even to a pretty woman who had flirted in the Gallery of Apollo and in the gardens of Versailles. There were, for example, a large number of young and charming officers, and there were balls and concerts, love-makings and intrigues. Josephine made up her mind to be ill again if the Man persisted in trying to induce her to follow him from town to town. But she could not escape his letters.

These letters told the story of the defeat and destruction of the second Austrian Army, Wurmser's Army, at Lonato and Castiglione, and of the maintaining intact of the "garter" of French troops which surrounded the "knee" of Italy. For example:

*July* 6.—"I have beaten the enemy. . . . I am tired to death. Pray start at once for Verona. I need you, for I think that I am going to be very ill. I send you a thousand kisses. I am in bed."

*July* 17.—". . . Ever since I left you I have been sad. I am only happy when by your side. . . . Have a good rest. Haste to get well. Come and join me. . . . Millions of kisses and even to Fortuné in spite of his naughtiness."

Fortuné was Josephine's little dog. On a later occasion Napoleon said to a friend, pointing to the dog which lay on a sofa :

" Do you see that gentleman ? He is my rival. He was in possession of Madame's bed when I married her. I wished to remove him ; it was quite useless to think of it. I was told that I must either sleep elsewhere or consent to share my bed. That annoyed me considerably, but I had to make up my mind. I gave way. The favourite was less accommodating ; I bear proofs on my leg of what I say."

*July* 18.—" A thousand kisses as burning as you are cold."

*July* 19.—" I have been without letters from you for two days. That is at least the 30th time to-day that I I have made this observation to myself. . . . We attacked Mantua yesterday. . . . All night long that wretched town has been on fire. The sight was horrible and majestic. . . . Achille has just ridden post from Milan. No letters from my beloved. . . . When will you be able to rejoin me ? I shall have to fetch you myself from Milan. A thousand kisses as fiery as my soul, as chaste as yourself."

The second Austrian Army consisted of 60,000 men ; Napoleon had 30,000. Italy, watching the unequal combat, held its breath. The Pope tried to strike the French in the back. In six days the issue was decided. In six days the Man took 15,000 prisoners, seventy cannon, nine stands of colours, and killed and wounded 25,000 of his foes. He lost himself only 7,000 men. During all the six days he did not once take off his boots nor lie down on a bed. At the end of them, when victory, amazing and incredible, was his, a Cardinal, sent by the terrified Pope, fell on his knees before him, saying : " Peccavi : I have sinned."

The Man put the Cardinal under arrest in a religious house. Then he granted to the Italian people of Lombardy the right to raise a regiment of Volunteers, like the Corsican Volunteers. It was the beginning of Italian freedom.

Josephine, still at Milan, received a letter to say, not that her husband was now the most talked-of man in Europe and the terror of all the enemies of France, a soldier greater than Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar, but that :

" I shall be comfortable only when I have got letters from you. I await them impatiently. You cannot possibly imagine my uneasiness. I left you vexed, annoyed, and not well. If the deepest and sincerest affection can make you happy you ought to be. I am worked to death. Adieu ! my kind Josephine ; love me, keep well, and often, often think of me."

Did she ? The Man went in pursuit of the beaten Austrians. Josephine went picnicing with young officers on Lake Como. There were more tremendous battles, Bassano and San Georgio, and more astounding victories.

*September* 10.—" My dear, the enemy has lost 18,000 men prisoners ; the rest killed and wounded. Wurmser . . . has no resource but to throw himself into Mantua. Never have we had successes so unvarying and so great : Italy, Friuli, Tyrol are assured to the Republic. The Emperor of Austria will have to create a new army ; artillery, pontoons, baggage, everything is taken.

" In a few days we shall meet. It is the sweetest reward for my labours and anxieties. A thousand fervent and very affectionate kisses."

The very next day, Napoleon, riding alone to a part of the battlefield where the Austrians were making a successful stand, was very nearly captured. He told Josephine nothing of that. In his letter of September 12 all he says is :

" The moment this matter is finished I will be in your arms."

He was conquering the world for an idea : the idea of the sovereignty and empire of the common folk. She was conquering the hearts of stupid men. Even the faith, which had been blind to the treachery of Paoli and to the worthlessness of Josephine, began to grow uneasy.

*September* 17.—"My dear, I write very often and you seldom. You are naughty and undutiful as well as thoughtless. It is disloyal to deceive a poor husband, an affectionate lover. Ought he to lose his rights because he is far away, up to the neck in business worries and anxieties? Without his Josephine, without the assurance of her love, what in the wide world remains to him? What will he do?"

The "garter" had been secured once more. The Pope and the King of Naples, whose hopes had risen high, were utterly quelled. The King of Spain, too, had thought it prudent to make his peace with the Revolution. The ships of England were losing more harbours. But in Germany, on the Rhine, the wall of steel, threatened for a time, had been strengthened by Austrian victories. These victories belonged to a young man, brother of the Austrian Emperor, of the Queen of Naples and of Marie Antoinette, the Archduke Charles. As a result of these victories, Austria was in a position to march large bodies of troops southward to attack Napoleon. For the third time the "garter" about the "knee" of Italy was threatened. Napoleon, in other words, was about to pay the price of weakness and bad management elsewhere. He was about to pay for the perpetual interference of the politicians in Paris with the Generals—for the other Generals of the Revolution had not taken the precautions which he had taken to avoid interference. He was about to pay, too, for the fact that his victories had united those old-time rivals, Austria and Russia. The Kings were gathering in force for his destruction. The Pope and the King of Naples and all the princes and priests whom he had subdued began once again to raise up their heads. "*This* time," they said, "the Man must be overwhelmed, we can now strike at him with perfect safety."

Napoleon wrote to Paris for more troops.

"They can count us," he declared in bitter sarcasm. "The charm of our strength is dissolving. Troops, or Italy is lost."

The War Office in Paris could give him few troops. He

set about trying to make sure of such friends as he possessed in Italy—the Italian common people. Italian Volunteers, he decided, should guard his rear when the time of danger arrived. Meanwhile he had set on foot a new project—of all his projects, perhaps, the dearest to his heart. He had collected together the Corsican refugees living in Northern Italy and supplied them with arms and officers. He had sent them off to try and win back his beloved home from the King of England. Paoli was no longer in Corsica; the English had quarrelled with him and he had been compelled to leave the island and return to London. Corsica had an English Governor and a staff of English officials.

Napoleon's scheme met with immediate and complete success. The Corsican refugees, whom he had armed, landed at Bastia and were welcomed as saviours by those very people who, at Paoli's bidding, had sacked the Bonaparte house. The mass of the Corsicans, now, as a result of their experiences of the English, belonged to the French Revolution and declared themselves the enemies of the Kings. That news, when he heard it, thrilled and cheered the Man in the middle of his overwhelming difficulties. It braced him to meet the new danger descending on him. Perhaps it compensated, a little, for the bitter and dreadful disappointment of his marriage. The young husband was blind no longer.

"Your letters," he wrote to Josephine on October 17, "are as cold as if you were fifty; we might have been married fifteen years. One finds in them the friendship and feeling of that winter of life! Fie! Josephine. It is very naughty, very unkind, very undutiful of you. What more can you do to make me, indeed, an object for compassion? Love me no longer? Ah, that is already accomplished. Hate me? Well, I prefer that. Everything grows stale except ill-will; but indifference with its marble pulse, its rigid stare, its monotonous demeanour!

"A thousand, thousand kisses.

"I am rather better. I start to-morrow. The

English evacuate the Mediterranean. Corsica is ours. Good news for France and for the Army."

Meanwhile Carnot and the politicians, being unable to send troops to Italy, sent interferers instead—politicians who were charged with the task of telling the Man his business. It was the old, old story; even the public opinion of France seemed to be weak against this lust of meddlesomeness. But, as it happened, the messengers of the politicians arrived in Italy just when the third Austrian counter-blow was being struck. They were kept waiting until the issue of the tremendous conflict should be known.

What a conflict it was! The Man at first in desperate position, forced to retreat from Verona and fall back in apparent confusion. Then the recoil. That tiger-spring at Arcole, on the dykes. Carnage and desolation renewed on three days. Then victory again, swift and overwhelming. The Man back again at Verona. And all this with 15,000 men against 40,000!

France knew of nothing to compare with Arcole. And her spirit was quickened within her when she heard how, at a great crisis of the battle, Napoleon had rushed forward, himself bearing the colours, into a hell of fire; and how his soldiers, aghast at his daring and his danger, had seized him and carried him back and made him remount his horse.

Josephine was still at Milan, in her palace. Two days after Arcole, Napoleon wrote to her a letter in which he said laconically: "The enemy is beaten at Arcole," and then poured out, once more, his love and devotion. She did not even answer that letter. And so, four days later, his bitterness and his disappointment broke forth:

*November* 23.—"I don't love you an atom; on the contrary, I detest you. You are a good-for-nothing, very ungraceful, very tactless, very tatterdemalion. You never write to me. You don't care for your husband, you know the pleasure your letters give him, and you write him barely half a dozen lines, thrown off anyhow.

"How, then, do you spend the livelong day, madam?

Who may this paragon be, this new lover, who engrosses all your time, is master of your days, and prevents you from concerning yourself about your husband? Josephine, be vigilant. One fine night the doors will be broken in and I shall be before you."

But he forgave her nevertheless—the next day.

*November* 24.—"I love you to distraction. . . . Your husband only needs Josephine's love to be happy."

At last the Man of Arcole was free to go to Josephine. On November 24, 1796, he wrote to her, to Milan, that he was coming. He came galloping after his letter. But Josephine had gone away to Genoa.

"I get to Milan [this was written on November 27], I fling myself into your room; I have left all in order to see you, to clasp you in my arms. You were not there. You gad about the towns amid junketings; you run farther from me when I am at hand; you care no longer for your dear Napoleon. A passing fancy made you love him; fickleness renders him indifferent to you. . . . I shall be here till the evening of the 29th. Don't alter your plans. Have your fling of pleasure; happiness was invented for you. The whole world is only too happy if it can please you, and only your husband is very, very unhappy."

Josephine did not come back, she did not even write. In gentler mood Napoleon wrote to her, the next day:

"When I wanted from you a love like my own I was wrong. . . . I was wrong since Nature has not given me attractions with which to captivate you. . . .

"Farewell, beloved wife; farewell, my Josephine. May fate concentrate in my breast all the griefs and troubles, but may it give Josephine happy and prosperous days. When it shall be quite settled that she can love me no more I will hide my profound grief and will content myself with the power of being useful and serviceable to her. . . .

"I reopen my letter to give you a kiss. Oh, Josephine, Josephine!"

Love's young dream was shattered. Even this husband saw at last the truth to which, for so long, he had shut his eyes : *Josephine did not love him, never had loved him.* Josephine was gay, frivolous. He might go back to his victories for all she cared.

The blow was nearly mortal. But the eater of soldiers' bread endured it. He had his dark hour alone, in the great Milanese palace, with the gaping crowds of his worshippers at the doors and under the windows, eager even to catch a glimpse of him. And, in that hour, he quelled his own soul. This, perhaps, was a victory greater than those of Rivoli or Mantua to which he was about to ride away. From this hour the Man would never again give his heart unreservedly to any woman ; from this hour women, with the single exception of his mother, would seem to him no better than playthings, toys. The woman who betrays a man's first love betrays all the other women whom that man is destined to encounter !

Napoleon rode away from Milan to give himself to the work of completing his victory. Six weeks later the world learned the name of Rivoli and heard that Wurmser, the Austrian General-in-Chief, who had shut himself up in Mantua, had surrendered. In three days Napoleon had taken 18,000 prisoners, and vast masses of guns and stores. Wurmser, the Austrian General-in-Chief, submitted to march out of the fallen city and to give up his sword to his conqueror (Feb. 1, 1797). But the Man did not wish to be present at that humiliation of his foe. As Sir Walter Scott wrote :

" Napoleon paid a delicate and noble-minded compliment in declining to be present when the veteran, Wurmser, had the mortification to surrender his sword together with his garrison. This self-denial did him as much credit, nearly, as his victory, and may be justly compared to the conduct of the Black Prince to his royal prisoner, King John of France."

The Austrian Army was destroyed. The "garter" had not been broken. Once again the Pope and the King of

Naples were at the mercy of the man whom, again, they had been so ready to stab in the back. Napoleon determined to rush down the " leg " of Italy and deal with those two sovereigns before he gave himself to the tremendous task which he had now decided to undertake—the task of marching towards Vienna, the capital of Austria.

That task meant, in the first place, crossing the Alps—for the Alps, as has been said, make a " garter," above the " knee," across Italy. Napoleon had had to cross the western side of the range to enter Italy from France. If he wished to leave Italy, in order to go into Austria, he must cross the range again, on the eastern side. He knew that every man whom Austria could put in the field against him would be brought up to resist that crossing. And he knew, too, that his enemies, the Kings and the priests of Italy, might attack him in the rear while he was marching eastward, over the Alps, towards Vienna. Venice, especially, with its haughty aristocracy, was very likely to attack him.

Why, then, undertake the task at all ? Why run such great risks seeing that Italy was cleared of the Austrians and that the wall of steel was definitely pierced. The answer was : because a successful march on Vienna, the enemy's capital, would mean immediate and glorious peace on every front.

Peace, immediate and glorious, was, Napoleon believed, absolutely necessary to the safety of the Revolution. Once again, as he had just been informed, the Royalists were growing active and powerful in Paris. They wished to see the war prolonged so that the armies might be kept busy—but without victory—on the frontiers while they seized upon power in the capital. They wished, above all, to be able to tell their fellow-countrymen that there was no real hope of a general and lasting peace till the King came back to Versailles.

Napoleon made his arrangements with the utmost speed and with great secrecy. He planned to begin his march as soon as the season was far enough advanced to allow him to pass through the great mountains, and

meanwhile, as has been said, he rushed down the "leg" and settled his accounts with the Pope and the King of Naples. The country through which he passed was full of French priests whom Robespierre had driven out of France. These priests appealed to Napoleon for help and he helped them—against the orders of the Government in Paris. "They weep on seeing us," he wrote to the Directors. "How is it possible not to pity their misfortunes?" In Napoleon's idea, the Revolution ought not to persecute any Frenchmen who were ready to be loyal to it. The march through the Alps, on Vienna, began on March 10, 1797, with the snow still several feet deep on the mountains.

"Soldiers," proclaimed Napoleon, "the capture of Mantua has put an end to the War of Italy. You have been victorious in fourteen pitched battles and seventy actions. You have taken 100,000 prisoners, 500 fieldpieces, 2,000 heavy cannon, and four pontoon trains. The contributions laid on the countries you have conquered have fed, maintained, and paid the army; besides which you have sent 30,000,000 francs to the Ministry of Finance for the use of the public treasury. You have enriched the Museum of Paris with 300 masterpieces of ancient and modern Italy, which it had required thirty centuries to produce. You have conquered, for the Republic, the finest countries in Europe. The Kings of Sardinia and Naples, the Pope and the Duke of Parma are separated from the Coalition. You have expelled the English from Leghorn, Genoa, and Corsica. Still higher destinies await you. You will prove yourselves worthy of them."

A fortnight later, on April 1, the Man was master of the summits of the Alps, and the Austrian Army, under the Archduke Charles, the Emperor's distinguished brother, was fleeing before him. The great port of Trieste had opened its gates to his victorious troops. Unhappily, at the same time, the treacherous men of Venice had attacked him in the back and were murdering his sick and wounded behind him. Worse still, the help which he had expected to receive from the other French armies, attacking the Austrians on the Rhine, was refused him. Once again

Carnot had decided to " go slow." He wrote to Napoleon that he had forbidden the other armies to attack for the present.

This meant that the Austrians, being unmolested on the Rhine, would be able to move large bodies of troops against Napoleon. The Man wrote a bitter letter to Carnot, in reply to the letter he had received ; he declared that it was a shame thus to refuse him help by not making an attack elsewhere on the enemy's front. Carnot, however, was not to be changed from his stubborn idea. Did Carnot wish to see the Army of Italy and its chief overwhelmed ? The news from Paris was very disturbing. Recent Parliamentary elections had actually gone in favour of the Royalists and, already, apparently, there was talk everywhere of bringing the King back to Versailles. The " Glittering Beings," Napoleon realized, in this, their moment of victory, would have no wish to see the power of Austria broken utterly and humbled by the armies of the Revolution. They, too, like Carnot, would naturally be in favour of " going slow." The Man set his teeth. These enemies of the Revolution, he vowed, should not triumph over him. They should not have the joy of seeing his army cut off and overwhelmed. He wrote to the young Austrian Commander proposing an immediate peace.

" As for me," he said, " if the overtures, which I have the honour to make to you, can save the life of a single man, I shall be the prouder of the civic crown which I shall feel that I shall have deserved, than of the melancholy glory which can result from military success."

The Archduke Charles replied that he was not in a position to discuss peace. Napoleon instantly attacked him again and drove him pell mell towards Vienna. Some of the French troops actually saw the spires of the Austrian capital. On April 7 a truce was asked for. Eleven days later the preliminaries of peace were signed.

That news, when it reached Paris, filled the Royalists with dismay. The Man had won : Austria was humbled.

The Army of Italy was safe. The news also greatly disturbed Carnot who feared a military dictatorship above everything. Carnot, however, had to pretend that he was well pleased and had to share in the rejoicings of the Parisians that the end of the war was now in sight. The other Directors, led by Barras, said that if the policy of " Go Slow " had not been adopted by Carnot, a still greater victory would have been attained. Carnot and Barras had begun to hate one another; the Directory (the Government) was divided. Carnot, almost in spite of himself, and certainly in spite of his strong Republican instincts, began to associate with Royalists, because these, alone, seemed able to help him against Barras. It was the Guillotine joining hands with the Throne—an unholy and most unnatural alliance—in opposition to the free exercise of public opinion.

Napoleon, when he heard this news, realized that a new and very serious attempt was going to be made to destroy the Revolution. As he had foreseen would happen, extremes had met to crush the spirit of Democracy. Carnot and his friends—the men who had once been such violent Revolutionaries—were now, whether they liked it or not, really on the side of the King.

There was not a moment to be lost. The Man hastened back to Italy and turned against the Venetians who had stabbed him in the back. He forced Venice to surrender herself and abolished, at a stroke, the power of the nobles of that ancient State. Then, freed from all his enemies, and everywhere triumphant, he came to Milan where, this time, Josephine awaited him. From Milan he wrote to Paris to warn Carnot that, if any attempt was made to coerce Democracy, he and his army would march to the capital and strike down the traitors. On July 14, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, a great festival of the armies was held in Milan. Napoleon addressed a proclamation to his soldiers:

" Soldiers," he cried, " this day is the anniversary of the 14th of July. You see before you the names of your companions in arms who have died on the field of honour

for the liberty of the country. They have left you an example. You owe yourselves wholly and entirely to the Republic; you owe yourselves wholly and entirely to the happiness of 30,000,000 of French; you owe yourselves wholly and entirely to the glory of that name which has received fresh lustre from your victories.

"Soldiers, I know that you are deeply affected by the calamities which threaten this country. But the country cannot incur any real dangers. The same men who have caused it to triumph over coalesced Europe are there. Mountains separate us from France; you will cross them with the rapidity of the eagle, in case of need, to maintain the Constitution, to defend liberty, to protect the Government and the Republicans.

"Soldiers, the Government is watching over the laws which are committed to its care. The Royalists, the moment they appear, will have ceased to live. Be not uneasy, but let us swear by the manes of her heroes who have died by our side for liberty, let us swear upon our new colours, implacable war against the enemies of the Republic. . . ."

This proclamation, along with addresses signed by thousands of soldiers, was sent off to Paris. It arrived there at a critical moment. Barras—who, with all his faults, represented the Democratic idea—had just summoned the gallant and glorious young Hoche, the General-in-Chief of one of the armies of the Rhine, to draw near to Paris with a body of troops so as to overawe Carnot and the Royalists inside of, and outside of, the Houses of Parliament. But the storm which this move had caused had so thoroughly terrified its author, Barras, that he had actually tried to repudiate his authorship. Hoche had been sent away from Paris full of disgust and anger, and those Directors who opposed Carnot—Barras and his friends—were even then beginning to talk of flight. They thought that the unholy alliance of Carnot and the Royalists, of the Guillotine and the Throne, was too strong to be resisted and that the end of the Revolution was therefore a foregone conclusion.

The proclamation of the Man recalled them to their senses. A mighty army, which had just, of itself, humbled the pride of Austria, was ready, they realized, at a word, to march to Paris in support of the Revolution. In a few days Barras and his friends passed from despair to hope and determination. They resolved to fight, and they felt sure of victory.

Once again, for the second time, Napoleon had saved the sovereignty of the people, the true democratic idea, from its mortal enemies the extremists—Carnot and his friends and the Royalists, both of whom, as he well knew, desired to substitute an arbitrary power for the free exercise of the public will. Had Carnot won, an iron political dogma would have been imposed, if necessary by means of the guillotine, on France. Had the Royalists won, the yoke of Versailles would have been fastened, once more, on the nation. The nation desired neither of these impositions; the Revolution, as France understood that term, and as Napoleon understood it, was Democracy, not tyranny, "self-control" by the nation, not control of the nation by any party or any faction.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE CHALLENGE OF THE TEA-CUPS

Napoleon was now the beloved of the French people, of the millions of peasants who had given their sons and brothers to defend the Republic and of the honest townsfolk, thrifty and hard-working, who had found in the Republic new hope and new enthusiasm. These people hailed his victories as their salvation and looked to him as to a saviour.

Nor were the peasants and townsfolk of Italy less devoted, for they too had been freed from the hands which oppressed them, and they too had found in the Man of Lodi, of Arcole, of Rivoli a tower of strength and a hope for the future. That slim, boyish figure; that pale, beautiful young face with its aureole of chestnut hair, those deep grey eyes, had become the symbols not only of victory over the lords of the earth but also of true freedom for the common folk. Here, in human form, in this frail, dauntless form, was the Revolution itself, not the Revolution of the Men of the Terror with its cast-iron creeds to which all must subscribe, its blood-red carts and its whetted blades, but the Revolution of the men of the looms and the men of the forges, with their honest toil and their frugal living and their deep, abiding independence of soul. Napoleon had become, in literal truth, the Man of France and the Man of Italy, and this manhood transcended and overbore even his glory as a conqueror. For he had conquered to save.

There was the fact which held France in thrall and which terrified the Royalists. The ruin of the Royalists, and of all who had become associated with them, even of the great

Carnot himself, was certain from the moment that the Man of France declared himself. It came, on flying feet. On the night of September 4, 1797, the fourth anniversary of Danton's awful massacres, Paris was filled with marching men. In the morning all the Royalists, and all those, whether Generals or Members of Parliament, who had *in any way* been associated with the Royalists, were arrested and imprisoned, condemned without trial and punished out of hand. Carnot fled to the frontier and so escaped.

Barras and his friends had acted. They had not, however, acted as Napoleon had advised them to act. They had adopted the methods of violence, the methods of Carnot and Robespierre and of the Men of the Terror, whereas the Man of France had urged that no law should be broken. You are strong enough, Napoleon had said, and the Revolution is strong enough, to proceed openly and according to law against every enemy of the Revolution. Dare to be Democrats.

Consequently—as soon as he had learned that violent measures were going to be taken—Napoleon had ceased to write to Barras and ceased to give any advice. He approved the end, but not the means.

"I wrote the truth to General Bonaparte," says the faithful Count Lavalette. "I declared that he would tarnish his glory if he gave any support to acts of violence which the situation of Government did not justify; that nobody would pardon him if he joined the Directory in their plan to overthrow the Constitution and liberty; that proscriptions were about to take place against the national representation and against citizens whose virtues made them worthy of respect; that punishments would be inflicted without trial; and that the hatred resulting from such measures would extend not only to the Directory, but to the whole system of Republican Government. . . . Those considerations made so much impression on the mind of General Bonaparte that he soon avoided, in his correspondence with the Directory, all allusion to the interior situation of France and, at last, left off writing to them altogether."

The silence of Napoleon, which they well understood, terrified Barras and his friends even in the moment of their great triumph over all their enemies. Napoleon's silence probably prevented the return of the red carts and the guillotine; there were no executions in this "Little Terror," as it was called, to distinguish it from that of Robespierre. But there were thousands of exiles. Barras and his friends dared not shed a drop of blood because the grey eyes of their Master were turned on them. Napoleon did not open his lips; but his commands, nevertheless, rang in the ears of the conquerors of Carnot and of the Royalists. Not one of these conquerors had courage enough to disobey his commands. But all of them, and Barras most of all, made up their minds to get rid, if possible, of this soldier who had driven them to action in defence of the Revolution and then, in their hour of triumph, had forced them to behave with a restraint foreign to their natures.

The Directors, Barras and his friends, despatched an order telling Napoleon to refuse to complete the treaty of peace with Austria, the preliminaries of which he had signed. "Austria," they said, "must be made to yield more and to humble herself farther."

Napoleon knew exactly what that meant. It meant war—the resumption of the march to Vienna. It was now the month of September and very soon the Alps would, again, be covered with snow. The Army of Italy, which still remained in Austria pending the final treaty of peace, might be cut off by the snows from its bases. A disaster was possible—even probable—for the Austrians had been adding to their army every day since fighting ceased. Barras and his friends were trying to ruin the Man who had overawed them.

For there was nothing now to be gained by continuing the war. Austria was humbled. The wall of steel was broken down. The terms of peace, which had been proposed, were glorious, beyond any possibility of misinterpretation. The Man of France sat down and wrote to the Directors asking them to relieve him instantly of his

command. He declared that he would not suffer their dictation and that he would not prolong a war which had become useless. Let them find another General.

Barras and his friends ignored this request. They did not even reply to it, because they did not dare to reply to it. What would France say if the Army of Italy was deprived of its mighty leader? What would France say if peace, glorious and honourable, was refused, and if, thereafter, disaster befell the army? The Man had thrust Barras and his friends into the very trap which they had so cunningly prepared for him. Once again, by saving his army, he had saved France. For his army, alone, stood between France and a fresh outbreak of violence at home and of weakness abroad—violence and weakness which must soon bring " King Louis XVIII " to Versailles. Hearing nothing from Paris, he acted on his own initiative and announced to the Austrians that he was ready to continue his peacemaking.

The Austrians also were ready. For the defeat of the Royalists in Paris had robbed them of the high hopes they had been cherishing of " getting off " easily. The fear of the Man of France, the Man of the Revolution, was in their hearts. Had they not seen him, in these last months, creating Republics in Northern Italy—in the very country where they had ruled so long? Had they not beheld him organizing a French Navy in the Adriatic Sea with which to attack the ships of England? Had they not witnessed the conquest of Venice and the humble submission of that ancient and proud aristocracy? Had they not seen the Republic of Genoa, only less famous than that of Venice, come humbly to ask his advice and help?

On the other hand, the Man of the Revolution was not bloodthirsty as were the Terrorists. His hatred was not venomous. He had treated the Pope respectfully; he had shown great kindness to the exiled French priests; he had reproved the plan of the Genoese to banish their noblemen from public life merely on the ground that they were noblemen. It would be better to make peace with this moderately minded Conqueror than with the fanatics of

Paris who, even at that moment, were driving every noble and every priest who had dared to return to France, out of the country once more.

The peace conference began in earnest. But the Austrian negotiator, Count Cobentzel, was a difficult man to deal with, and days passed without any decisive result. October came, and with it, on the High Alps, the snows; Napoleon, who realized that if the war were now to begin again, his position would be a hazardous one, became impatient and uneasy. He made various concessions; he offered Venice—the proud, independent Venice of the centuries, the Venice, too, which had murdered his wounded—to Austria in exchange for the freedom of Northern Italy. Count Cobentzel, in the name of his royal master, offered Napoleon, personally, the rulership of an Austrian State of 250,000 inhabitants if he would leave the French Army. This rulership, it was promised, would be his and his family's for ever. Napoleon replied that he desired nothing save what the French people might wish to accord him.

Then the discussions grew more heated. On October 16 Count Cobentzel accused Napoleon, to his face, of sacrificing the interests of the French people to personal ambition. The Man of France retained his composure under that insult. But, suddenly, he rose to his feet and stepped to the sideboard of the room in which they were sitting. On the sideboard was a porcelain tea-service belonging to Count Cobentzel, the gift to him of the great Empress Catherine of Russia. Napoleon raised the tea-service in his two hands.

"War is declared," he said; "but remember that, in less than three months I will demolish your monarchy as I dash in pieces this porcelain."

He hurled the tea-service to the floor.

Then he bowed to the Austrians in the room and immediately ordered his carriage. He told an aide-de-camp to inform the Austrian commander, the Archduke Charles, that fighting would begin in twenty-four hours.

Next day, October 17, the immortal treaty of Campo Formio, as it was called, was signed. The tea-service had served Napoleon's purpose.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### "GO—TO ENGLAND"

Barras and his friends were compelled to accept the treaty exactly as Napoleon had signed it. They did not dare to do otherwise, because Paris and all France had hailed it, and the peace which it brought, with almost boundless rapture. The Peacemaker of Campo Formio was more than ever now the Man of France.

He bade farewell to that Army which worshipped him as a god and to that Italy which he had saved from her oppressors.

"We have given you liberty," he declared in a final proclamation to the Italians, "take care to preserve it. To be worthy of your destiny; make only discreet and moderate laws; cause them to be executed with energy. Favour the diffusion of knowledge and respect religion. Compose your battalions not of disreputable men but of citizens imbued with the principles of the Republic and closely linked to its prosperity. You have, in general, need to impress yourselves with the feeling of your strength and with the dignity which befits free men. Divided, and bound down for ages by tyranny, you would not have conquered your liberty; but in a few years, were you to be left to yourselves, no power on earth will be strong enough to wrest it from you. Till then the Great Nation will protect you against the attacks of your neighbours; its political system will be united with yours. . . ."

The way to Paris was strewn with roses. There were banquets, there were triumphal arches, there were bevies of girls, dressed in the red, white, and blue of the Revolution, presenting crowns. The Man of France—that slim, pale boy—received the homage with a charming modesty

which thrilled every spectator. He seemed to enjoy it only because the lovely woman at his side, the wife who had scorned him, but whom he had forgiven, took in it so great a pleasure. On December 5, 1797, he drove into the capital. He hid himself immediately in the modest little house in the Rue Chantereine which, in anticipation of this hour, he had bought a short time before.

But the next morning all Paris clamoured at his door. All Paris was determined to see the Peacemaker, the Statesman, the Conqueror, the Sage, the Hero whose deeds had thrilled the whole civilized world—the young man of twenty-eight years of age whose glory already rivalled that of Alexander the Great, of Julius Cæsar, of Oliver Cromwell. The Man of France, however, was not to be seen. He had become a private citizen.

That was in the true Corsican tradition, the tradition which this man followed like a faith. While the peace discussions had been going on in Austria he had called his mother and sisters and brothers to his side as well as Josephine. Letitia had lived with her son in the middle of his glory and the Bonaparte house had been rebuilt, spiritually, on that foreign soil. Joseph and Louis, Eliza and Pauline had had their share of the triumph. Joseph had become Ambassador to the Pope since then, and Eliza and Pauline had married, the former a subaltern officer named Bacciochi, and the latter General Leclerc, the son of a flour merchant; but Letitia had come to Paris, and Lucien, who had returned to Corsica after the English were driven out, and had been elected there a Member of Parliament for Corsica, was now in Paris among the Five Hundred—that is, in the Lower House. Napoleon, therefore, had his mother, his brothers Lucien and Louis and Jerome, and his sister Caroline beside him in Paris. This gave him the purest pleasure; the happiness and comfort of all these beloved people, to which he had been able to minister on so liberal a scale, was his sweetest reward.

Paris, though, was not to be denied. A message came to the Man of France that that sphinx among statesmen, Talleyrand, the Foreign Minister, whose fortunes were

destined to be so closely linked with his own, would like to come and visit him. Talleyrand, as Napoleon knew, had, in the past, served other masters than Barras and his friends. He had been a priest in Holy Orders, and then a Bishop; he would have been a Cardinal if good King Louis XVI had not specially begged the Pope to withhold from a man of unworthy reputation so great a dignity. Nevertheless King Louis himself had been glad, in the last days of Versailles, to make use of the services of Talleyrand. When the crash came Talleyrand had supported the Revolution, but later, because he was a nobleman, he had fled out of France to escape the fury of Robespierre. Barras had made him Foreign Minister because Talleyrand was by far the best man available for the job. Talleyrand was told that Napoleon would, instead, come to him the next morning. But that act of simplicity did nothing to allay the eagerness of the rulers of France to see and hear the hero. Most of them had already called at Napoleon's house; all of them had been told that the General was resting and that he asked to be excused from seeing visitors. They heard of the appointment to see Talleyrand and came crowding to the Foreign Office. The public also heard of it and crowded the streets. But the Man arrived by a back way. He presented himself immediately before the Minister. These two, who had not met before, measured each other with swift eyes. Then Talleyrand conducted Napoleon to the presence of the five Directors, the Big Five, consisting now, exclusively, of Barras and his friends.

What a sight was that for the eater of soldiers' bread, for Paoli's man! The Directors wore brilliantly coloured mantles and had huge feathers in their hats. Bands of musicians discoursed music for their delectation. There were girls about. A pomp, like the gilding of a provincial playhouse, attended them. Napoleon was amazed, confounded. Were these the men who dared to tell the soldiers of the Revolution their business? The men who ruled the millions of faithful, industrious, patriotic Frenchmen? Versailles, with its faults, had at least held a certain dignity, a certain beauty.

The Man of Valence and Auxonne, the midnight student of the Professor's house, accustomed to his single meal and his bitter thrift, held himself in cold reserve. He was polite; nothing more. He showed deference to the rulers of France; to the men themselves he showed nothing. They decreed—a little uneasily—an immense festival in his honour, such a festival as must have rejoiced the heart of a village showman suddenly grown millionaire. The great hall of the Luxembourg Palace was chosen as the scene; the formal presentation of the treaty of peace with Austria as the occasion. In that great hall an "altar" was built—the altar of France—and, around the altar, on its steps, there were five chairs set for the five Directors, Barras and his colleagues. Barras, the man of plumed hats and mantles, of women and wine and song, came dressed in a *toga* of Ancient Rome. The other Directors were also dressed in *togas*. They seated themselves on the steps of the altar. Around them, in a vast amphitheatre, were the Ministers, the Ambassadors, the Members of Parliament, Lucien among the number, everybody who was anybody. Lovely women filled the galleries—women some of them the loveliest and the loosest in Europe. On the walls were the flags which the Man of Lodi and Arcole and Rivoli had taken from the enemy; the strains of music filled the huge apartment. Cannon thundered in the streets.

The doors of the great hall were thrown open and a slim, boyish figure appeared, dressed in the severe and simple uniform of a General of the Republic. His face was very pale; but his eyes, it is said, and his features expressed stern thoughts. He walked towards the Directors, those Romans of the drawing-room and the café. He bowed before them.

"Genius and authority," said an eye-witness, "were imprinted on his countenance."

He turned and cast a glance, perhaps, at the gallery where his mother and his sisters—and Josephine—were seated. The audience rose to its feet shouting: "The Republic for ever! Bonaparte for ever!"

Then Talleyrand made a speech in which he called the

Man of Soldiers' Bread, "the Liberator of Italy." "General Bonaparte," said Talleyrand, "detests luxury and splendour, the ambition of vulgar souls; he loves the poems of Ossian because they detach us from the earth."

"Citizens," Napoleon replied, "the French people, in order to be free, had Kings to combat. To obtain a Constitution founded on reason, it had the prejudices of eighteen centuries to overcome. The Constitution of the Year III [1794], and you, have triumphed over all obstacles. Religion, feudalism, royalty have, successively, for twenty centuries past, governed Europe; but from the peace which you have just concluded dates the era of *representative* governments. You have succeeded in organizing the Great Nation, whose vast territory is circumscribed only because Nature herself has fixed its limits. You have done more. The two finest countries in Europe, formerly so renowned for the arts, the sciences, and the great men whose cradles they were, see, with the greatest hopes, genius and freedom issuing from the tomb of their ancestors. These are the pedestals on which the destinies are about to place two powerful nations. I have the honour to deliver to you the treaty signed at Campo Formio and ratified by His Majesty the Emperor [of Austria]. Peace ensures the liberty, the prosperity, and the glory of the Republic. When the happiness of the French people shall be seated on better organic laws, all Europe will become free."

The Romans of the drawing-room listened in amazement. The Man of France was actually telling them what he thought of them. It was he, with his plan, who had won for France the limits which Nature had fixed—the Alps and the Rhine, the "natural frontiers"—which this treaty secured, and now he demanded "*representative* government" from the very men who, but two months before, had torn Members of Parliament from their seats and sent them, unaccused and untried, into exile. "*Peace ensures the liberty of the Republic.*" And it was Napoleon who had made peace—against their orders—at the moment when they were full of plans for snatching liberty away and beginning a new tyranny. And now, "*when the happiness*

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*of the French people shall be seated on better laws . . .*" Barras and his friends looked down from their thrones into the grey eyes of their master. Barras rose to reply. He announced that Napoleon had been appointed General-in-Chief of the Army of England :

" Go," he cried, " and by the punishment of the Cabinet of London strike terror into the hearts of all who would miscalculate the powers of a free people. Let the conquerors of the Po, the Rhine, and the Tiber march under your banners ; the ocean will be proud to bear them ; it is a slave, still indignant, who blushes for his fetters. Hardly will the tricolour standard wave on the bloodstained shore of the Thames, ere a unanimous cry will bless your arrival and that generous nation will receive you as its liberator."

" Go—to England." The face of the Man remained impassive ; but he saw, in imagination, his army destroyed, on its way, by the ships of England, or left to suffer ruin and annihilation in the great island. So, the Alpine winter being so longer available for the purpose, this was the new way chosen for his removal ! He bowed his head. A great standard, inscribed with his achievements, was presented :

" *Triumphed in* 18 *pitched battles ; fought* 67 *actions.*"

There followed days of worship ; but Napoleon fled from his worshippers. He was charming always ; but as elusive as he was charming. While others drank whole fountains of pleasure in his honour, he returned to the fare of his boyhood—work and study and soldiers' bread. He had been made a member of the Institute of France and he loved to wear the academic dress of the Institute and to associate with learned men and men of science. The drawing-rooms saw him but seldom.

" When," he declared, " on my return to Paris from Italy I assumed the dress of the Institute and associated with men of science, I knew what I was doing ; I was sure of not being misunderstood by the lowest drummer of the army."

But this stern simplicity only increased the rage of the people to see and hear. The newspapers printed columns about him; the gossips never tired of his name. His enemies said that his simplicity was a mere pose to hide his ambition—they knew not Paoli's man, the midnight student of Auxonne.

They were plentiful though, these enemies. The Man who, twice over, had plucked their prize from the Royalists, at the very moment when it had seemed to lie within their grasp, was the foe of every King in Europe. The Man who had humbled the Emperor and his Austrians, the Pope, the King of Naples and a host of smaller Kings might expect the undying hatred of Royalty and of organized religion. The man who had dared and defied the Men of the Terror, who was still daring and defying them, could have no friend among the friends of Carnot or even, now, of Barras. The man who ate soldiers' bread and lived the Spartan life in the Paris of the Directory, shaming its luxury by his plain living, must soon become an object not of worship but of wonder. Let him look to himself.

He saw and understood. But this man was not the conqueror of Kings only, nor yet only of a debauched Government. He had conquered also, in those awful hours of loneliness in the palace at Milan, his own heart. He, who had made allowance for the neglect of the woman he loved, could make allowance for all other hostilities. He could even anticipate them.

"You need not talk to me," he cried to a friend, "of the desire of the citizens to see me; crowds at least as great would go to see me led to the scaffold. I am determined not to remain in Paris. There is nothing to be done here."

He might have added that he had turned a deaf ear to those who proposed that he should use his power to destroy the five Directors and seize the reins of Government. There was much to be done elsewhere. For the Revolution was still in deadly danger; and still its salvation rested entirely in the hands of one single man. Let

Napoleon suffer eclipse and the warring factions would be at each others' throats again in a day; the morrow of that day must see the end of "representative government" and the beginning of some new tyranny, Royalist or Terrorist. But how to prevent that ever-present danger? Napoleon was resolved that he would not snatch illegally at power, except in the last extremity. It was idle, too, to go to England and so fulfil the wishes of every foe.

And yet in England, without doubt, lay the greatest of all the dangers which threatened the Revolution from beyond the frontiers of France. The King of England, George III, was the implacable foe of the Revolution and of Democracy. He it was who had furnished the French Royalists with the means to make their attacks—in La Vendée, in the seaports of France, in Paris itself. The King of England had sent vast sums of money, too, to help the Austrians during the recent war in Italy. His ships filled the Mediterranean, his sailors crowded every port in that sea from which the sword of Bonaparte had not driven them forth. Though the ring of steel about the breast of the Revolution was broken on the land; it remained unbroken, infinitely oppressive and infinitely dangerous, on the ocean.

So long as the ships of England held the seas, the King of England would be able to strike where he chose at the body of France; he would be able to send succour to the enemies of France; he would be able to strengthen those hands which, in the very bosom of the Republic, made ready to strike the Revolution a mortal blow.

The Man set out to visit the seaports of the French Atlantic coast; but already a new plan was coming to completion in his mind.

"The art of war," he once said, "lies in calculating odds very closely to begin with and then in adding exactly, almost mathematically, the factor of chance. Chance will always remain a sealed mystery for average minds."

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE SWOOP OF THE SEA-HAWK

England then, as now, was deeply concerned about her relations with the peoples of India. For the greatness of England was founded then, as now, on her vast overseas Dominions. To strike at India, therefore, Napoleon realized would be to strike at England.

The way to India, for English ships, lay round the Cape of Good Hope. But there was a shorter way, overland, by Egypt and the narrow Isthmus of Suez. If France, argued Napoleon, held Egypt and was able to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Suez, from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, her ships would be able to reach India long before the ships of England—going by the Cape route—could get there. Egypt, therefore, was the key wherewith to unlock the sealed door of British supremacy in India. Let France take Egypt and the ring of steel by sea would be pierced just as the ring of steel by land had been pierced. England would be compelled to divide up her navies so as to fight in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea as well as in the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. And her case would be rendered the harder by reason of the fact that all the ports of Spain and of Italy were now closed to her. Let Malta be won, as Corsica had been won, and England in defending India would be faced with a task too great, perhaps, even for her powers.

There, in a few sentences, are the reasons which determined Napoleon to embark on his Egyptian Campaign. But he had other reasons not less practical. Liberty, he had begun to see, exists only in its exercise—in freedom to live one's own life and perform one's own work, in freedom

to buy and sell, in freedom to organize and build up. France talked all the time about liberty; but she had scarcely, as yet, begun to exercise it. The talk was dangerous and led to constant commotions; the exercise must be productive of stability and strength.

France, in short, in Napoleon's view needed trade and, above all, supplies of raw material for her industries. She needed contact with her few remaining colonies that they might send her stuffs for her craftsmen to work on and that they might buy from her, in exchange, the products of her work. It was England which prevented this freedom of French trade. The dispersal of the fleets of England, which the conquest of Egypt must occasion, would open the seas to French ships and so bring about a restoration of French trade. Then, the merchant, the peasants and the artisan would, all of them, find new openings for their enterprise and so taste the first-fruits of the sacrifices they had made in the cause of Liberty. The Revolution, too, when this happened, would be able at last to save itself—for men who are full of productive work have no place in their minds for the bitterness of brawling factions. Let the Republic make France a nation of producers, a nation rich in the arts of peace, and even the promises of the Royalists must ring false and hollow.

Napoleon, therefore, in going to Egypt, was going to complete the work which he had begun in Corsica, continued during the day of the "whiff of grapeshot," and brought to full accomplishment in Italy—the work of establishing Democracy, the true spirit of the Revolution. Italy had crowned the Revolution with the glories of war and of statesmanship; Egypt should bring, in addition, the glory of commerce.

The Directors, those men of the plumed hats, did not like this plan and opposed it vigorously. But the Man was not to be thwarted. He, who might, had he been less careful of law and order, have swept them away and seized their power, pleaded with them. He wrung from them a reluctant consent. And then he began to prepare his expedition. He engaged the services of the best of his

Generals of Italy; he took a corps of over 100 men of science who should assist him in the development of the resources of Egypt—what General before had ever set so shining an example to the world? he took engineers whose business it should be to plan and dig the Suez Canal. Thirty thousand soldiers were to compose his army. On May 6, 1798, Napoleon reached Toulon where the expedition had been gathered. The soldiers of the Army of Italy welcomed him with a lively joy which nothing could restrain.

"Soldiers," he cried, in a new proclamation, "you are one of the wings of the Army of England; you have waged war in mountains, in plains, at sieges; you have still to wage it on the sea. The Roman Legions, which you have sometimes imitated, but not yet equalled, fought Carthage by turns on the sea and on the plains of Zama. Victory never forsook them, because they were constantly brave, patient in enduring fatigue, well disciplined and united together.

"Soldiers, the eyes of Europe are upon you! You have great destinies to fulfil, battles to fight, dangers and hardships to surmount; you will do more than you have yet done for the prosperity of your country, the happiness of mankind, and your own glory.

"Soldiers, seamen, infantry, artillery, cavalry, be united! Recollect that, on the day of battle, you have need of one another.

"Soldier-seamen, you have hitherto been neglected; now the greatest solicitude of the Republic is for you. You will be worthy of the army of which you form a part.

"The genius of liberty, which has made the Republic, from her birth, the arbitress of Europe, decrees that she shall be so to the most remote seas and nations."

The proclamation did not tell where the expedition was going. The soldiers had no care. Their "Little Corporal" was with them once more. Before they set sail he endeared himself to all of them still further by putting a peremptory stop to the cruel persecution of—among others—old women and young children which

" Terrorists," sent by the Directors, were carrying on in Toulon as a part of their tyranny.

The French fleet sailed on May 19. It made, first of all, for Genoa, where a convoy awaited it; then it ran to Corsica, where two further convoys had been gathered. There were now 400 transports, carrying nearly 30,000 men and escorted by fifteen sail of the line, cutters and smaller craft—a flotilla of 501 ships, carrying water for one month and provisions for two. Napoleon was in the *Orient*, Admiral Bruey's flagship. He suffered a good deal from sea-sickness; but his activity never relaxed and he kept the men of science, who accompanied him, busy answering his questions. Early in the voyage the Admiral, one evening, pointed out to the General the distant summits of the Alps lighted by the setting sun.

" I think," wrote Bourrienne, of this incident, " that I can see Bonaparte still. He stood for a long time motionless, and then, bursting from his trance, exclaimed:

" ' No, I cannot behold the land of Italy without emotion. Those mountains command the plains where I have so often led the French to victory. With them we will conquer again.' "

On June 9 Napoleon's fleet reached Malta, that tremendous fortress in which a " round-table " of lazy Knights—the Knights of Malta—relics of the Middle Ages—lived in luxury and in pomp. The Man had already determined that this fortress—to which the English sailors were welcome visitors—must be secured. But the Knights refused admittance. Napoleon instantly landed troops and surrounded the place. He brought his guns to bear on it. The next day the Knights surrendered. The Man had gained possession of the best harbour in the Mediterranean and of one of the strongest fortresses in the world almost without striking a blow. His daring and his name and, it is said, his diplomacy had given him what his guns could never—had the place been properly defended—have afforded him. Ten days later he sailed for Egypt, leaving a strong garrison behind him.

So far he had not seen a single English ship. Yet the ships of England were hunting him, day and night, across all the broad Mediterranean—the ships of England under the command of Nelson. Nelson, with thirteen sail of the line, had made, first of all, for Toulon. Then he had gone to Naples, and then to Egypt. But the French had not yet reached Egypt. Nelson refused to wait, fearing that he had made a mistake. He sailed for the Dardanelles, thinking that this might be Napoleon's object. On July 1, Napoleon came in sight of Alexandria. He had passed scatheless—without a shot fired—through the wall of steel which England had built up on the seas. Egypt lay before his wondering gaze.

Egypt, as Napoleon knew, was then an oppressed country like Italy; foreigners ruled it. But these foreigners—the Mamelukes—were not lazy cowards like the Knights of Malta; they were, on the contrary, brave and warlike men, perhaps the strangest and most romantic body of warriors in the world. The Mamelukes were slaves who had been bought by Turks in Circassia. They were chosen, each one of them, for good looks alone. The Turkish Government then sent them off, pitiable orphans, to Egypt to be trained as cavalrymen. Nothing was ever told them—if indeed anything was known—about their parents or their birth; they possessed no home, no country, no relations. They were soldiers —that and nothing more. And they held it an honour to be without origin, to have been bought at a high price and to be immensely handsome and immensely brave. Every Mameluke was treated as a kind of nobleman; he had two body-servants of the native Egyptians and the natives were compelled to kiss his oppressing hands. Egypt was supposed to belong to the Turks; in reality it belonged to the Mamelukes who had become almost independent of their Turkish masters and who did exactly what they chose.

It was these "Orphans of the Desert" against whom Napoleon must fight. He had already studied their history and he possessed a good cause of quarrel with them

—for they had for long been interfering with French merchants and French commerce. He determined to spring upon them before they were properly prepared to defend themselves.

His ships reached Alexandria in a gale; they were fired at and did not dare to enter the harbour. The Man decided to land at once on the rocky coast, even though the sun had already begun to set over the desert. He was the first to spring into the long-boat prepared for his use. His soldiers, seeing that example, clamoured to follow him. The hundreds of tiny craft went tossing ashore in the gathering darkness, lashed and beaten by the waves. The Man sprang on to the beach. An exclamation of dismay escaped his lips. A sail was visible just above the horizon. Had Nelson found them, after all—at the very moment when they were least well able to defend themselves?

"Oh, Fortune!" cried Napoleon, "dost thou desert me?"

Fortune did not desert him. The sail belonged to a French man-o'-war. The Man paced the beach until 4,000 of his men had landed. Then he determined to rush on the town of Alexandria. Not a single horse had as yet come ashore. Through the night, under the deep stars, the little band hurried on, over the shifting sand. When the first, pale light of dawn blanched the Eastern sky they had travelled twelve miles. The sun rushed up to reveal the towers and minarets of the city of Alexander the Great.

Napoleon caught his breath. He stood a moment to gaze on the strange and moving spectacle. Then he gave the word to advance. His men rushed at the half-ruined walls of the city, whence a brisk fire assailed them. They flung their scaling ladders against the walls. Before night the Man was master of the city. He told the inhabitants that he had not come to ravage their land, not even to take it away from the Sultan of Turkey to whom it rightly belonged. His sword, he declared, was turned only against the Mamelukes.

"People of Egypt," so one of his proclamations ran, "you will be told that I am come to overthrow your religion. Believe it not. Reply that I am come to restore your rights to you, to punish the usurpers, and that I have a much higher respect than the Mamelukes for God, His Prophet, and the Koran."

It is not surprising that the Man of Soldiers' Bread should have cherished respect for the stern and self-denying religion of Mahomet—the nearest creed of all, perhaps, to that of his beloved Spartans. Nor is it surprising that he desired to secure to all men complete religious tolerance. By the self-same means Englishmen have since secured to England the title of the greatest of Mahometan states. The story that Napoleon became a Mahometan himself is merely silly. To his soldiers the Man proclaimed:

"You are going to undertake a conquest the effects of which on the civilization and the commerce of the world are incalculable. You will give the surest and the severest blow to England which can be given until it lies in your power to strike her a death-blow.

"The people with whom you are going to live are Mohammedans. The first article in their faith is this: 'There is no God but God, and Mahomet is His Prophet.' Do not contradict them. Act towards them as you have acted towards the Jews, towards the Italians. Pay respect to their Muftis and to their Imans, as you have done to the Rabbis and to the Bishops. Show the same toleration for the ceremonies prescribed by the Koran and for the mosques as you have done for the convents, for the synagogues, for the religion of Moses, and for that of Jesus Christ. The Roman Legions protected all religions. You will here find customs different from those of Europe; you must habituate yourselves to them. The people amongst whom we are come treat women differently from us. Recollect that, in every country, he who violates is a coward.

"The first city that we shall come to was built by Alexander. We shall meet, at every step, with glorious recollections worthy to excite the emulation of Frenchmen."

When it is remembered that religion had been abolished from France by the leaders of the Revolution and that it had sometimes, during the days of Terror, been as much as a man's life was worth to profess Christianity openly, the full meaning of Napoleon's proclamation will be realized. Napoleon was no lover of priests at any time. But he hated religious persecution and always tried to put it down. He hated, too, to see women ill-treated: "*Recollect that, in every country, he who violates is a coward.*"

It was the month of July; the rising of the Nile and the floods were due. If Cairo were to be reached—by river at any rate—there was not a day to be lost. Napoleon made his arrangements for river transport and then decided to rush on, himself, in advance of his boats, across the desert. That was a tremendous decision, for, though the desert way to Cairo is the shortest, it is also the most difficult and the most trying. How would these soldiers of Europe endure, for four days, the scorching sun and the blistering sand, the lack of water, the fearful fatigue?

The Man was not kept waiting long for an answer to that question. On July 6, his columns began to march. The very next day his army reeled in amazement and horror. Complaints began to break out, there were ugly scowls and mutterings. On the second day the soldiers seemed almost mutinous. They saw nothing but the everlasting desert, felt nothing but the maddening sun, stumbled in wastes of shifting sand, and found themselves with scarcely a drop of water and with little or no food.

That day the Man marched among them, on foot, cheering them, and trying to arouse their spirits. That night he lay down on the sand beside them. His food for the day had been only a dish of lentils—such food as he had learned how to enjoy in the Professor's house at Auxonne. The grumblers were put to shame. But when the sun rose again, and they saw once more the awful horizons of the sand, their hearts grew afraid. On the horizons of the sand Arab horsemen rode, ready, as they knew, to cut off any stragglers. The Arabs had destroyed all the wells.

" Wait till you come to Damanhour," cried Napoleon, " you will find refreshment and shade there. And beyond is Cairo."

They came to Damanhour. It consisted of but a few huts. It held nothing but lentils. A wild outcry broke out: " Where is your Cairo ? We do not believe that any such place exists." Even the officers began to fail under the awful, pitiless skies. Lannes—the mighty, fearless Lannes—and Murat, lord of a score of battles—plucked their hats from their heads. They threw their hats down and trampled them with their feet into the dreadful sand. Only the Man retained his strength and his courage. In all this violence and mutiny and fury, he was calm, cheerful, resourceful. He overawed them all. When he was not encouraging his soldiers he was talking to the scientists, urging them to make observations even in this inferno. The scientists rode on donkeys; the angry soldiers called every scientist " an ass."

But the spirit of the Man had quelled the soldiers and it had lifted them up. Their grumblings grew less; their courage returned. They began to sing again their marching songs—those mighty hymns of the Revolution, the cadences of which had throbbed already through every land in Europe:

" *Allons enfants de la Patrie. . . .*"

And so, singing and glorying in their leader whose leadership never failed and whose courage was indeed like water in the desert, they came at last to the Nile and to salvation. And, after that, the marching was along the river banks. The soldiers grew cheerful again and began to develop a liking for the men of science, the " horsemen of the donkeys." The morning of July 21, 1798, broke. The French Army beheld on its left across the Nile the minarets of Cairo, on its right the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

The rays of the rising sun smote the minarets and Cairo flashed and glowed a city all of gold. Even the Pyramids seemed to have been set aflame. Napoleon

galloped down the ranks. He halted his horse and pointed to the Pyramids :

" Consider," he cried, " that from the summits of those Pyramids forty centuries have their eyes fixed upon you."

The army advanced. A sight still more splendid and more awe-inspiring awaited it—the army of the Mamelukes drawn up to defend the city, ten thousand horsemen clad in armour of steel, inlaid with gold. The sunlight swept ten thousand lances and the air was full of the glitter of naked steel. Like diamonds, those spear-points flashed and scintillated. Like silver shone the helmets and the breast plates. A mighty shout of defiance rose from ten thousand throats. The " Orphans of the Desert " drove their spurs into their horses' flanks.

The charge of the Mamelukes is among the imperishable wonders of the world. Like a tide they came, surging and foaming, fuming in the clouds of dust which enveloped them as spray ; the living waters were poured out on the bayonets of France. And the waters were turned to blood. The terrible horsemen, the dread of Egypt and of all the caravan routes of Africa and Asia, were broken, scattered, dismayed. . . .

The tide of blood ebbed away from the French bayonets. The Battle of the Pyramids was at an end. Cairo lay at the feet of its conqueror.

The Man entered the great city. He took immediate steps to see that his promises to the Egyptians should be fulfilled, and he gave himself, all day and all night, to the work of organizing the country, of giving it better laws, better sanitation, better conditions of life. His mercy and his wisdom filled the natives with wonder and a chant in his honour was sung in the Great Mosque. But the day of August 1, 1798, the day of the Battle of the Nile, was at hand. Nelson had found the ships of his enemy at last.

The transports, it is true, were empty. But the men-o'-war remained. The Sea-Hawk of England swooped down on his prey. In one awful and splendid night the

fleet of 501 ships, which had brought Napoleon and his soldiers from France, was ruined and destroyed. The *Orient*, the flagship on which the Man himself had crossed the Mediterranean, took fire at ten o'clock, shortly after Admiral Brueys had been killed on his quarter-deck. The great ship blew up with so frightful an explosion that the battle automatically ceased for a little while. The awful sound was followed by a silence still more awful. It was of the Captain of the *Orient*, Casa Bianca, a Corsican, that the famous lines beginning, "The boy stood on the burning deck. . . ." were written.

Of thirteen ships of the French line, nine were taken and two burned; of four French frigates one was sunk and one burned. The French lost 5,225 killed and 3,105 wounded. The British loss was 895 killed and wounded. The Sea-Hawk had done his work well. The wall of steel by sea, which Napoleon had pierced, was restored again. The Man, to his dismay, found himself on the outer side of the wall of steel, shut off from France, without even the means of returning to her. So terrible a situation must have daunted the spirit of the strongest. For a moment Napoleon staggered. Then the grey eyes recovered their steadiness. The stern features were composed.

"We must die in this country," he said, "or get out of it as great as the ancients."

Not by a flicker of an eyelid did the Man betray to his soldiers the anxiety he felt. On the contrary, he attended festivals and held reviews. He was present at the festival of the Nile on August 22, and he became—after Monge, the man of science—President of the Institute of Egypt, which he had founded. He proposed the following scientific inquiries:

"The best construction of wind- and watermills; to find a substitute for hops, which do not grow in Egypt; to find the best places for planting vines; how to bring water to the citadel of Cairo; where to dig wells; how to cool and cleanse the water of the Nile; how to dispose, usefully, of the rubbish of Cairo; how to make gunpowder in Egypt."

The men of science and the engineers addressed themselves to these problems. The Battle of the Nile began to assume less terrifying proportions. Napoleon wrote to Madame Brueys, the wife of the Admiral who had lost his life, a letter full of kindness and sympathy :

" Your husband has been killed by a cannon ball while fighting on his quarter-deck. He died without suffering —the death the most easy and envied by the brave. I feel warmly for your grief. The moment which separates us from the object which we love is terrible ; we feel isolated on earth ; we almost experience the convulsions of the last agony ; the faculties of the soul are annihilated ; its connection with the earth is preserved only across a veil which distorts everything. We feel, in such a situation, that there is nothing which still binds us to life ; that it were far better to die ; but when . . . we press our children to our hearts, tears and more tender sentiments arise and life becomes bearable for their sakes. Yes, Madame, they will open the fountains of your heart ; you will watch their childhood ; educate their youth ; you will speak to them of their father, of your present grief and of the loss which they and the Republic have sustained in his death."

A strange letter, perhaps, to come from the pen of a young man of twenty-nine years of age. But the writer, alas ! knew only too well those feelings which he described. He, too, felt isolated on earth. For a blow more terrible than the swoop of the Sea-Hawk Nelson had smitten him down.

Once again it was the hand of Josephine which had struck him. That beautiful, frail woman had accompanied him from Paris to Toulon when he set sail ; and she had seemed, in those precious days, to love him at least a little. In that love he had forgotten the days at Milan ; he had even persuaded himself that perhaps, after all, she cared for him in her own gay fashion. But now came news from France—news carried through the wall of steel—that Josephine was living openly with a man who had been too familiar with her in Italy and whom, Napoleon

had, in consequence, sent back from that country to France —a cavalry officer named Hippolyte Charles.

The news reached the Conqueror of Egypt at the time when both Europe and Asia were ringing with his name. In the first chill of realization he wrote to Joseph:

"I am tired of human nature. I want solitude and isolation; grandeur wearies me; my affections are dried up."

But presently there came reaction. He had Josephine's son by her first husband, Eugène Beauharnais, with him, and he loved the lad of eighteen deeply. He actually revealed his distress to the boy who wrote long afterwards:

"It was generally at night that he thus unbosomed himself, walking with great strides up and down his tent. I was the only person to whom he could talk openly. . . . I comforted him as best I could and as much as my age and the respect I felt for him permitted."

Others were less considerate, and one of his officers, Junot, told him frankly that the whole Army of Italy had known what was going on—only the husband, as usual, had been blind. Bourrienne, who was present, tried to soften matters. Napoleon turned on him:

"Had you cared for me you would have told me all I have just learned from Junot. He is a true friend. Josephine! and I am 600 leagues away. . . . You ought to have told me . . . Josephine! to have thus deceived me! She! Woe to them! I will exterminate the whole tribe of fops and puppies. . . ."

Bourrienne spoke of Napoleon's glory.

"My glory! What would I not give if only what Junot has told me were not true, so dearly do I love the woman."

Josephine was, in fact, living with Hippolyte Charles, and going about openly with him every day in Paris, so that all "the asses in Paris" laughed—while decent folk, filled with love and admiration of the Man of France and Italy and Egypt, blushed to behold his shame.

The poison corroded Napoleon's soul. He was a Corsican, as fierce and proud as he was brave and wise. He was, too, the sword of the Revolution, the hope of twenty millions of honest Frenchmen. Those who mocked him, mocked also the cause for which, daily, he gave all that he had. They mocked his beloved soldiers, the men of Lodi, of Arcole, of Rivoli, of the Pyramids. They mocked the Revolution. France herself. The Man of the Revolution, the " Little Corporal " of thirty thousand veteran patriots, the Sage, the Statesman—a silly cuckold !

The grey eyes grew terrible. He spoke of divorce. He wrote to Joseph : " A public overwhelming divorce." But even that would not serve to blot out the shame. There was one way, only one way in which the impression of catastrophe could be removed. *The silly husband must show himself, after all, a man of the world.*

Cairo was full of pretty women always on the look out for new adventures. Many of these women had tried to win the fancy of the all-powerful Commander. The Man, in his despair, began to drive about the streets of Cairo in an open carriage with a fair-haired girl named Pauline Fourès, the wife of a cavalry officer, who had come to Egypt disguised as a soldier. He actually issued an order to the lady's husband to return to Europe—in the manner of King David with Bathsheba. The whole army talked ; the whole city was filled with gossip. The fair Pauline received, there and then, the nickname of " Queen of the East." But Eugène, Josephine's son, was filled with grief and shame. He confided his trouble to Berthier, Napoleon's secretary and aide-de-camp. Berthier told his master. From that hour the reign of the favourite came to an end.

It is, certainly, a lamentable story—even granting that it served its purpose of making the Man of France less ridiculous in the eyes of the world. Pauline was a baggage and need not be pitied ; the pity lies only against Napoleon himself, and perhaps—though even this is doubtful—against Pauline's husband.

Let us not forget, however, as we pass judgment, that Nelson rushed away from his victory of the Nile to the

arms of the lovely Emma Hamilton, the wife of the British Minister to the Neapolitan Court, who was his friend and admirer. The moral standards of that period were somewhat different from the moral standards of to-day.

And let it be added that all that is *certainly* known of Napoleon's relations with this girl, Pauline, is that he did everything in his power to suggest—nay, to advertise—that they were irregular.

There is a strange order of Napoleon's of this period which indicates the manner in which he ruled his army. It runs as follows:

"Citizen Boyer, Surgeon, who has been so cowardly as to refuse help to some wounded because they were supposed to be infected, is unworthy of being a French citizen. He is to be dressed in woman's clothes and paraded through the streets of Alexandria on a donkey, with a board on his back, on which shall be written: 'Unworthy of being a French citizen—he fears death.'"

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE SULTAN OF FIRE

But it was not only news about Josephine which the couriers from France brought with them. They brought also stories of the disorder into which the Government in Paris was falling. Again, once again, the Men of the Terror and the Royalists were on the warpath; the whole structure of the new Democracy was threatened.

Napoleon had been told that he might return to France whenever he chose, and he would certainly have returned at once—for personal as well as for public reasons—had not another piece of ill-news come to him. The Sultan of Turkey, to whom Egypt was supposed to belong, had heard of the defeat of the Mamelukes with great delight; but he had no wish to see the French take the place of these rebellious warriors. And he had large numbers of Englishmen at his Court at Constantinople. The Englishmen had told him of Nelson's victory and said that, now, since that victory, the army of Napoleon was cut off and could easily be destroyed. The Sultan, consequently, was fitting out two armies to destroy the French Army. One of these Turkish armies was to come to Egypt overland, round the end of the Mediterranean Sea, by Palestine and the desert; the other was to sail straight across from Constantinople to Alexandria.

The Man realized that he was in a very tight corner indeed and that, for the moment, it was utterly impossible for him to leave Egypt. Before he could leave his army he must establish it in safety. He had scarcely come to this decision when a terrible outbreak, worked up by the

friends of the defeated Mamelukes, occurred in Cairo itself and threatened to destroy him. He put it down with a stern hand, as indeed his position rendered it absolutely necessary that he should do. Then, in February 1799, he set out across the desert of Sinai—the wilderness in which Moses led the Israelites—to meet the overland Turkish Army.

That movement was swift as the spring of a panther. Early in March the Man was in Gaza; on March 15 he took Jaffa and with it a large number of prisoners who had already given their word not to fight against him and had broken it. He could not again trust these Turkish prisoners and he had no means of sending them back to Egypt. It was their lives or the lives of his soldiers. He ordered them to be shot. Thiers, the great French historian, calls that "the only cruel act of Napoleon's life." Yet the Man himself did not regard it in this light, but merely as one of the dreadful necessities of war. At St. Helena he said:

"I would do the same thing to-morrow and so would Wellington or any General commanding an army under similar circumstances."

He had with him but 13,000 men. The Turkish Army, which was approaching, numbered 25,000 men. In these circumstances the taking of prisoners was out of the question. The French Army, moreover, had become infected with plague. On March 20 the Man reached Acre, that famous seaport at the foot of Mount Carmel, which had been taken, centuries before, by the Crusaders under Richard of England, "the Lion-Hearted." Napoleon knew how much depended on the taking of Acre. If he took it and defeated the Turkish Army, the Holy Land and Syria would be his and he might advance at a bound towards Damascus and Anatolia. Such a threat to Turkey herself would prevent the sailing of the second Turkish Army which was destined for Egypt. It was even possible that Constantinople might be reached and the whole Turkish power broken.

An immediate attack on Acre was made. But the place resisted the assault. And the Man had no big siege

guns! His whole train of big guns, which had been sent by sea from Egypt for the very purpose of battering in the walls of Acre, had been captured by the ships of the King of England under the command of Sir Sidney Smith. Once again the ships had triumphed; the big guns instead of being used to break down the walls were actually mounted on those very walls for their defence. To try to take such a place, defended in such a way without any big guns and with only 13,000 men already, many of them, plague-stricken, was a desperate enough task in any case. It was an appalling task in the face of a hostile army numbering two to one of the besieging force.

This hostile army, the overland Turkish Army, was coming from Damascus across the River Jordan. Reports of excited natives said that it was as numerous "as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea." Napoleon, undismayed by these reports, resolved to go and meet it. He took 6,000 men from his army of 13,000 around Acre—leaving the remaining 7,000 to continue the siege—and marched towards the Jordan. The way lay through that valley in which, on the hillside, the little village of Nazareth stands. Napoleon spent a night in Nazareth, in a religious house. I have often wondered what were his thoughts, for his thoughts were always busy with the historical events associated with the places he visited, and this even on the most urgent occasions. I wonder, sometimes, too, whether the picture of the tiny Nazareth, as he had seen it on that day of his glory, was in his mind at St. Helena when he uttered the famous words which, in truth, some say were invented for him, but which seem to me personally entirely in keeping with his character. These words:

"It is not the same with Christ. Everything in Him astonishes me; His spirit soars above mine, and His will confounds me. Between Him and every other person in the world no comparison is possible. . . . I have inspired multitudes of men who died for me. Certainly I possess the secret of this magical power which exalts the spirit. . . . Now that I am nailed to this rock, who fights and conquers

empires for me ? . . . What an abyss of distance between my misery and the eternal reign of Christ—preached, incensed, loved, adored, living through all the world ! Is that death ? Is it not rather life ? Such is the death of Christ. It is that of God . . . all is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery that plunges me in a reverie from which I cannot escape, a mystery that is under my eyes and endures, which I can neither deny nor explain. I see nothing of the human in this."

From Nazareth Napoleon rode to Mount Tabor, reputed to be the Mount of Transfiguration, where on April 16 the battle was already joined with his advance troops. Endor, where King Saul came in his horror and fear to consult the witch, lay a little way to the right. The 6,000 faced the 25,000 on the plains of the Jordan. Before the fall of night the Turkish Army was routed and dispersed. One Frenchman, under Napoleon, had proved himself more than a match for four Turks.

The Man rushed back to Acre and resumed the siege. But his army was dwindling as the result of the battle he had fought and because of the ravages of the plague. He learned with dismay that 12,000 fresh Turkish troops had been brought to Acre in English ships, and were about to land in the harbour. He ordered a last tremendous assault. It took place by night. The French broke through the walls and entered the town. But they came too late. The enemy's fresh troops were already ashore and the attackers were driven back. Napoleon realized that he must give up the unequal task, for, now, only about 9,000 men remained to him. He had accomplished his chief purpose—the destruction of the Turkish overland army. If he delayed longer the Turkish sea army might reach Egypt before he was able to return there. " Mr. Smith," he recorded in his diary, " is firing away, hot and heavy."

He gave the order to put an end to the siege and set his face to return to Egypt. In spite of his smashing victory over the Turkish overland army, he was bitterly disappointed. Acre and Acre alone stood between him

and the rulership of the Holy Land, perhaps between him and the conquest of Turkey. Had he captured Acre the Turks would scarcely have dared to send an army by sea to Egypt and he might have remained in Palestine and organized that rich land. Instead he must flee back, across the dreadful desert of Sinai, to fight the sea army which now would certainly be sent against him.

But the Man never allowed himself vain regrets. Since he had not succeeded in saving Egypt entirely in Palestine, he must save Egypt in Egypt itself. Like a whirlwind he sped back to Cairo, braving and overcoming danger, including the plague. (The story that he ordered plague-stricken soldiers to be given overdoses of opium is now known to be a slander.)

He did not come a moment too soon. The friends of the Mamelukes were stirring up new trouble, and his own troops, who had been left to guard the country, were growing mutinous. They were sick of Egypt and wanted to return to France; they complained bitterly that they had been brought to die in these horrible deserts. Napoleon set his teeth. Once more he cast over those mutinous men of his the spell of his personality. He rallied them; he encouraged them; he shamed them; he filled them with his strong spirit. They began to hope; they lifted up their heads.

The revolts were quelled. Preparations for meeting the sea army of the Turks were pushed forward. The Man snatched victory out of the greedy fists of despair. He rushed to the coast, where the sea army had already landed. He had with him but 6,000 men, the same number as that with which, in Palestine, two months before, he had defeated the overland Turkish Army of 25,000. The Turkish sea army numbered 13,000. But the sea army was led by English officers and had the support of English ships; and it was composed of the finest of the Turkish fighting men. Napoleon was advised to wait, before attacking, until more troops should have reached him from Cairo.

He did not wait. That swift and faultless judgment

perceived that the leaders of the sea army had made a mistake in the way they had placed their troops. Just as the red sun came up on the morning of July 25, the 6,000 Frenchmen were ordered to advance. The Turks fought fiercely and the gunboats of England, sailing on the same waters as those on which, almost a year before, Nelson had destroyed the French fleet, raked the gallant 6,000 with their fire. The battle became, in a short time, a hand-to-hand encounter, an affair of swords and daggers. But the Man, whom the Egyptians had named "Sultan Kebir," the Sultan of Fire, had not miscalculated. The Turks found themselves at a disadvantage. The 13,000, outmanœuvred and dismayed, broke before the 6,000. Panic seized them. They rushed back, down the sands, and hurled themselves into the sea. The whole Turkish Army was utterly destroyed.

More than 12,000 Turkish corpses floated, a few days later, in that Bay of Aboukir on the waters of which the bodies of so many French sailors had floated a year before. Egypt was saved.

The great French General, Kleber, who arrived with the now unnecessary reinforcements later in the day, when he saw what had been done, clasped the Man in his arms.

"General," he cried with deep emotion, "you are as great as the world."

Napoleon deserved that compliment. For though the Sea-Hawk of England, the glorious Nelson, had cut off his line of retreat, and separated him from France, though Josephine, his beloved wife, had plunged the dagger of public shame in his heart, though Cairo had twice revolted against him and threatened the very existence of his army, though two—relatively—immense Turkish armies had been sent against him, though the loss of his big guns had brought about the failure of his attack on Acre, and though plague and mutiny had, each in its own way, undermined the courage and devotion of his soldiers, yet had Napoleon made Egypt safe for France and so, in spite of Nelson's victory, forced England to divide her fleets and extend the

sphere of her activity. Disaster, despair, a thousand dangers and distresses had not prevented the Man from achieving in full the purpose which he had set out to achieve.

The Revolution had been well served by its son. But what, meanwhile, had been happening to the Revolution ?

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### A BUNDLE OF NEWSPAPERS

Napoleon soon learned the truth—through the instrumentality of a packet of newspapers which Sir Sydney Smith, his noble adversary of Acre, had the courtesy to send to him. The truth was far worse than could possibly have been anticipated.

France, in a single year, had lost all the glory and the strength which the Man had won for her by his Italian campaign. Italy was again in the hands of her oppressors —of Austria and Sardinia, of the Pope and the King of Naples. The ring of steel by land had been almost completely restored. And in Paris chaos and confusion reigned. One group of Directors had given place to another; but the new seemed to be worse than the old. The Government was bankrupt, penniless, discredited. The rival gangs were howling their rage at each other. Distracted and dismayed France looked in vain for a deliverer. Again men said that anything, even the return of the King to Versailles, would be better than this defeat and disorder, this endless procession of suffering and shame.

Napoleon spent the whole night, after he received the bundle of newspapers, in devouring this lamentable news. He cried to his aide-de-camp as he read:

"Heavens, my presentiment is verified. The fools have lost Italy. All the fruits of our victories are gone! I must leave Egypt!" He added: "If ever I have the luck to set foot in France again the reign of chatter is over."

The decision was no sooner taken than it was carried out. The Man appointed Kleber to take over his command —and he never, in all his life, made a better appointment. On August 22, 1799, with Berthier, his secretary, Lannes, Murat, and other Generals, and two of the scientists whom he had brought with him, he set sail in one of the few French ships which remained available. He left a victorious army ; he braved what his friends told him was almost certain capture by the English. But he was not afraid. When the ship was becalmed some of the officers begged him to try to return to Alexandria.

" Be quiet," he said. " We shall pass in safety."

I do not know why Napoleon felt this confidence, but that he did feel it there is no doubt. The fear of the English ships simply left him unmoved. Probably his mind was reaching forward already to the danger, with which he was rushing to grapple, that the Revolution would fall once more into the hands of the Men of the Terror.

His reading of the newspapers had shown him how great that danger had become, for the Revolution was back again in the position which it had occupied under the Government of the " Dreamers." France was threatened anew by all the Kings ; the Men of the Terror were raising their heads and calling for a new Danton and a new Robespierre. It was obvious that they were making ready to strike a blow against the Government—the Directors. The chances of success, for these new Terrorists, as Napoleon could see, were good. For, of the five Directors, two—Gohier and Moulins—were drawn from the ranks of the Men of the Terror, and one of these two, Gohier, was President of the " Big Five." This was a different " Big Five " from that the Man had left behind him a year ago ; the Government had, in the last year, been patched and pulled about like an old coat. Would the other three Directors help or hinder the schemes of the Men of the Terror ? There was the question which set Napoleon pacing the decks of the ship and which made him careless of present dangers.

Among the other three was his old acquaintance " wine-women-and-song " Barras. Napoleon knew his Barras. The man was hopelessly corrupt, hopelessly addicted to luxury and good living. Barras would always support the strongest party—but he would not give his support till he was quite sure which way the cat was going to jump. The Men of the Terror would need to show some convincing evidence that they were likely to win if they wanted to get Barras's vote. Happily Barras was the only danger, for the remaining two members of the Big Five had no sympathy with the Men of the Terror. They were Sieyès, the ex-priest, the man whom Mirabeau had nick-named " Mahomet " in the far-off days of King Louis' Parliament at Versailles, and Roger Ducos. It was " Mahomet " who really mattered, for Roger always followed his friend's lead.

" Mahomet " was a " Moderate," a dreamer, and all the moderate men in both the Houses of Parliament—the Ancients and the Five Hundred—followed " Mahomet " and trusted him. France, too, the great mass of the French folk, followed " Mahomet." Napoleon's eyes grew troubled. The mischief of " Mahomet " was that, like all " Dreamers," he talked but did not act. At King Louis' Parliament at Versailles, when everybody was saying that a Constitution must be made for France—" like a pudding " as Arthur Young remarked—" Mahomet " had made an excellent Constitution. But that " pudding," much to the annoyance of its cook, had never been eaten. Most of " Mahomet's " plans seemed to fall down. And yet who else was there to prevent the Men of the Terror from seizing power and setting up their guillotines once more ? With " Mahomet," or without " Mahomet," Democracy, the Revolution, France herself, must be saved from the men of the red carts and the guillotine.

Suddenly the calm which had received the ship in the first days of her voyage was broken. A fierce gale began to blow. The vessel was driven far out of her course, and was compelled to run for shelter to the nearest harbour. As it happened the nearest harbour was that of Ajaccio in

Corsica. It was the captain of the ship, not his distinguished passenger, who decided on Ajaccio. But Napoleon, for all his anxiety and all his hurry, rejoiced in the decision. Once more he would set foot on his dear island.

The ship hove to. A boat came out to her. Later Napoleon, with his brothers-in-arms, Lannes and Murat and Berthier, walked up the familiar street from the harbour to the Citadel amid the ecstasy of the town. The Man showed his friends "the house in which we lived"—the house from which his mother had fled away and which Paoli's men had ravaged. Where were Paoli's men now, six years after that event? Napoleon, the man who had driven out the English, was hailed by the whole mass of his fellow-townsmen. Those who, six years ago, had cursed, now poured out blessings; those who had been ready to spill Napoleon's blood and the blood of his mother and brothers and sisters, humbly begged his forgiveness.

The eater of soldiers' bread forgave them all—he forgave even Paoli, now an exile once more in London. But he found it hard to forgive the French Government the fact that the troops stationed in Corsica had not been paid for more than a year!

Ajaccio prepared to make amends with feastings and fireworks, balls and bonfires. And as the wind blew contrary and the ships of England hovered on the horizons, there was time for these junketings. But the sweetest moment of all was Camilla Ilari's moment when, shyly, the good old woman, who had mothered the hero's earliest hours, came to him carrying in her hand a bottle of milk:

"Take it," she stammered, "for though once I gave you the milk of my heart, now I have only the milk of my goat to give you."

I like to picture that moment and to remember that the Man gave Camilla rich gifts of land and later brought her specially to Paris to see him crowned Emperor of the French, introducing her there, with pride and love, to the Pope and all the other dignitaries of the world. . . .

The wind veered. A fancy-dress ball which was in progress was interrupted. Napoleon bade good-bye to his boyhood's home. The ship stood out to sea; when dark came the mountains had sunk below the horizon. Napoleon at thirty years of age had looked his last on Ajaccio, though he was destined, from a distance, to see Corsica once again.

The coast of France rose up over the bows.

## CHAPTER XL

### "BONAPARTE FOR EVER!"

The ship put into Frejus, that quiet little town on the Riviera. The moment it became known that General Bonaparte was aboard the sea became studded with dozens of rowing boats. The good fisherfolk of Frejus seized the Man and carried him ashore in utter disregard of the protests of the quarantine officers.

"There is plague in Egypt," these officers cried.

"Better plague than the Austrians," answered the hero-worshippers.

And so spoke all France, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. France came to the Man and took him in her arms, and in these strong, faithful arms, to the sound of pealing bells and by the light of mighty bonfires, carried him all the five hundred miles from Frejus to Paris. For France, not less than Napoleon, feared the second coming of the Men of the Terror. At six o'clock in the morning of October 18, 1799, the Man descended from his post-chaise at his own door in the Rue Chantereine.

The street was empty; Paris had not yet awakened. He knocked on the door.

"Josephine!"

But Josephine was not there. She had gone to meet her husband, and, by ill luck, had taken the wrong road. Napoleon had her son Eugène with him; he asked the boy to leave him alone. Two hours later, at eight o'clock, he left the house and drove to the palace of the Tuileries to report himself to the President of the Big Five, Gohier, one of the Men of the Terror. The guard at the palace recognized him.

"Bonaparte for Ever!" they shouted as they presented arms.

The next days were days of illumination. For all Paris rushed to worship the Rising Sun. The Men of the Terror came; and Napoleon learned as a fact what he had guessed already, namely, that the Men of the Terror were ready to act; they proposed that Napoleon, who had been the friend of Augustin Robespierre, should act with them. The moderate men came too, and spoke of their fear of the Men of the Terror. And the soldiers came and spoke of their disgust. For though the armies of the Kings had been driven back at Zurich, yet Italy was lost and all the fruits of Napoleon's great treaty of peace were lost. Peace itself, which had seemed already at hand only a year ago, was lost.

"To the devil with the lawyers!" (politicians) cried the soldiers. "We will follow you!"

That was the cry of twenty million Frenchmen, peasants and fisherfolk, workmen and merchants. Yet the Man gave no sign. He had sworn to obey the Government. And besides, his heart was heavy. Josephine had returned but he had not yet seen her.

He had refused, on the advice of his mother and sisters and brothers, to have any dealings with her. Lucien, especially, had been emphatic on that point—for Lucien was now a rising politician and resented bitterly the shame which Josephine's behaviour had brought on the whole family. On the day on which news of Napoleon's return to France had reached Paris, Lucien had been made Chairman ("Speaker") of the Lower House of Parliament, the Five Hundred, as a special mark of esteem to Napoleon. Lucien was in no mood to see his brother befooled any further.

"No further relations between us," said Napoleon. "She shall not set foot in my house. What do I care what people will say? . . . Forgive her? *Never!*"

And so, while the study of the house in the Rue Chantereine was open to all France, it was closed to Josephine. The Man ate alone; he came and went alone.

The procession of his callers, of the great and the greedy, the fierce and the frivolous, the courageous and the merely cunning continued all day and far into the night, and the Rue Chantereine was full of gaping sightseers. There were cheers every time Napoleon showed himself—the echo of the cheers of a whole nation, longing for the peace and rest which Napoleon alone seemed able to bestow. News came, indeed, that for sheer joy of the Man's return an honest Member of Parliament had fallen down dead.

Among the callers were Talleyrand and Fouché. But "Mahomet" Sieyès did not come. "Mahomet" who, years later, on his death-bed, was to lie delirious, shuddering still in fear of Robespierre and the guillotine, remembered only that General Bonaparte had been Augustin Robespierre's friend. "Mahomet," alone of all the moderate men, said that France had no need of Napoleon. "Let us forget him," cried "Mahomet" almost with anguish, "and then perhaps he will be forgotten."

So it would be necessary to save France without "Mahomet." Napoleon grew more and more uneasy. And more and more the idea of divorcing Josephine weighed sadly on his mind. He closed his doors to the callers and hid himself. Josephine had been living under the same roof with him for three days and he had not seen her! On the third day he ordered her to leave the house.

"As she came down the staircase in tears," he afterwards recorded, "I saw Eugène and Hortense, who were following her, sobbing. I was not given a heart for nothing, and I cannot remain unmoved when I see tears flowing. Eugène followed me to Egypt. I have accustomed myself to look on him as my adopted son; he is so brave, he is such a good boy! Hortense is just coming out; all who knew her speak highly of her. I confess, I was deeply moved, I couldn't resist the sobs of these two poor children; I said to myself: 'Are they to be the victims of their mother's ill-conduct?' I stopped Eugène. Hortense turned back with her mother. I said nothing. How could I help it? Every man is weak!"

And still France waited for his decision, and still the danger which he had come to avert drew nearer. Paris hummed with rumours. The armies of the Kings threatened on the frontiers. The Royalists, who had not come to Napoleon, had their ears strained to listen. The "Big Five" sent for Napoleon and offered him the command of any of the armies which he might choose to command. He asked for a little more rest. He went to dine with Barras at the Luxembourg Palace at Barras's request. Barras dangled a bait before his eyes; the advantage of working with himself. Barras spoke for an hour, using every kind of persuasion, direct and indirect. And during all that hour Napoleon did not utter a single word. The moment he left Barras he went to the rooms of "Mahomet" Sieyès who, as a member of the "Big Five," also had apartments at the Luxembourg Palace. Thanks to the underground work of Talleyrand, Napoleon knew that "Mahomet" was getting over his first nervousness and was ready to receive him.

"Barras," said Napoleon to "Mahomet," "is a rascal, a rotter. I will not act with him, but only with yourself."

"Mahomet," as usual, had a plan in his pocket. The "Big Five," the Government of the Directors, he said, cannot save the Revolution. Unless we act at once the Men of the Terror will jump into the saddle. But I cannot consent to act except in accordance with the laws.

"Nor I!" said Napoleon. "I have always refused to break the laws. Besides, there is no necessity; we have France with us."

That was the language "Mahomet" wanted to hear, the language which he had been afraid that he would never hear from the friend of Augustin Robespierre. He drew his plan from his pocket and began to expound it.

The "Big Five," he pointed out, is divided against itself. Two of its members, Gohier and Moulins, are Men of the Terror; Roger Ducos and I are, as you know, moderate men. Finally there is Barras. I propose that Roger and I should resign our membership and—I think it can be done—take Barras with us. If we succeed in that move

there will be no Government left, because the law says that no decisions can be taken unless three members of the "Big Five" are present. Gohier and Moulins will be powerless. "Mahomet" the Plan-maker stopped there, perhaps, to allow his young friend to appreciate his wisdom and his wiliness.

It will be necessary, he continued, in these circumstances, for the two Houses of Parliament to appoint a new Government. I propose that instead of a "Big Five" we should have a "Big Three." And I propose that the "Big Three" should be called Consuls, in the Roman fashion, and not Directors. The three Consuls will be yourself, my friend Roger and myself.

Again, perhaps, "Mahomet" paused.

The trouble is, he added, that the Lower House of Parliament, the Five Hundred, is packed full of Men of the Terror. You know these people as well as I do. At the first whisper of my plan they will go tearing off to their kennels and their gutters, shouting that the Revolution is in danger. They will raise their horrid mobs and we shall have bloody heads on pikes once again.

"Mahomet" shuddered, certainly, as he spoke. Then he began to explain how the danger of the arousing of King Mob might be avoided. The Parliament must not meet in Paris. It must choose the new Government elsewhere—at St. Cloud, for example. Mirabeau had given that very piece of advice to King Louis ten years before. "Don't run away to the frontiers," he had said, "but go away, calmly and openly, to some other place where the mobs cannot pour into your palace or your parliament." King Louis did not take Mirabeau's advice. Napoleon assented instantly to the advice of "Mahomet" Sieyès.

"For God's sake let us have no more mobs."

"Mahomet" must have warmed to his young friend now. In his own mind he had already selected as the place of meeting of the Parliament the orangery of the palace at St. Cloud—that palace, now destroyed, which poor Marie Antoinette had built for herself in the days before the crash in order to escape from the insufferable odours of the

ill-drained Versailles, and in the gardens of which, after the crash had begun to resound, she had received Mirabeau secretly, by night, to ask his help. "Mahomet" said that he had thought out a plan by which the Parliament could be transferred to St. Cloud without breaking any law. The Upper House of Parliament, the Ancients, had the legal right to say exactly where and exactly when the Parliament was to meet.

"I can answer," said "Mahomet," "for the Ancients. The majority of them are my men. They will do what I wish."

"Mahomet" added that he would ask the Ancients to appoint General Bonaparte Commander of the troops charged with the duty of superintending the removal of the Parliament from Paris to St. Cloud, and he pointed out that, happily, Napoleon's brother Lucien was President of the Lower House, the Five Hundred, from which the real trouble was to be expected. Then he and Napoleon shook hands and separated.

"Mahomet" chose November 9 for making the first move of his game of political chess. He got "whips" sent to the Ancients summoning them to meet at seven o'clock in the morning. The Five Hundred were summoned for eleven o'clock, that is, four hours later. Thus the dangerous men, the Men of the Terror, who were members of the Five Hundred, would probably be still in bed while the decision was being taken by the Ancients to move to St. Cloud. Even so, however, "Mahomet" did not feel quite safe—so great was his fear of King Mob and of the friends of Robespierre. He got Napoleon to see, personally the Colonel in charge of one of the dragoon regiments stationed in the capital and find out the feeling of the men. Many of these men were veterans of the Army of Italy; there was no doubt about their feeling. It was arranged that, under pretext of holding a review in the Place de la Concord the troops should, at five o'clock in the morning, be placed round the palace of the Tuileries where, at seven o'clock, the meeting of the Ancients was to occur. In addition, mounted men were to be posted in

the Rue Chantereine, on each side of Napoleon's house—in case of accidents. "Mahomet" himself had already taken riding lessons so as to be mounted on the great day. The Men of the Terror should find that it was necessary to rise early in order to be up before "Mahomet" Sieyès, the Plan-maker.

Napoleon, also, had had his experience of plan-making. He sent notices to all the officers, who wished to be presented to him, that he would receive them at six-o'clock breakfast on the morning of November 9, and he bade to this breakfast every general in Paris who had offered him support. He also invited to breakfast Gohier, the President of the "Big Five" and the leader of the Men of the Terror, who, as yet, had no belief that anything serious was afoot in the camp of his opponents and who did not, in any case, know of the friendship of Napoleon for "Mahomet."

The morning of November 9, 1799, had not yet broken when detachments of cavalry began to go jingling along the boulevards. At the same time, on the footways, large numbers of officers of the highest rank were hurrying along through the gloom. Every one of them wore his full uniform. All were going in the same direction—to the Rue Chantereine.

That little street, in the darkness of the morning, was full of Generals and Colonels and Captains Commandant. They all came to the same door. There were crowds of them about the door. Very soon every room in the house was packed to suffocation. What did it all mean? What was going to happen? Still more officers were arriving so that, as dawn broke, the street looked like a parade ground.

There was a movement in the crowd. Some one was trying to struggle to the door of the house. It was Cornet, a member of the Ancients, the Upper House of the Parliament. He cried that he carried a letter for General Bonaparte. He was helped to the door and disappeared within the house. A moment later the windows of a room on the first floor were thrown open and Napoleon appeared

on the balcony accompanied by the messenger of the Parliament. At the sight of his slim figure the hum of voices in the street was silenced instantly.

"Citizens," cried the Man of France, "France is in danger. The Ancients have just decided to remove the Parliament to St. Cloud and have appointed me Commander-in-Chief of all the troops in the 17th Military Division of the National Guard. I rely on you to help me. Will you help me?"

There was a strange thudding sound. Every officer had clapped his hand to the hilt of his sword. Every voice answered: "We will help you."

"I am summoned now to the Parliament," the Man added. He re-entered the house. Fouché, that wolf with a sheep's face, the Chief of the Police, came hurrying in to say that he had closed the gates of the city and stopped all the coaches.

"Why?" asked Napoleon—who until this moment had refused to have anything to do with Fouché.

"To help you."

"Good God, man," cried the Man of France. "We go with the nation and by its strength alone. Let no citizen be disturbed and let the triumph of public opinion in no way resemble the doings of other days in which gangs and groups seized on power."

A message arrived to say that Gohier, the President of the "Big Five," was not coming to breakfast. Had the Men of the Terror begun to smell a rat? Napoleon mounted his horse; all the Generals of France, whose horses had also been ordered to be ready, sprang into the saddle. The splendid troupe, with the Man of France at its head, rode down to the Parliament House in the palace of the Tuileries.

In the courtyard of the palace, that courtyard where, seven years before, he had seen the heaped-up, bloody corpses of the massacred Swiss Guards of King Louis, and where, four years before, he had himself directed the

"whiff of grapeshot," Napoleon found drawn up some of his dear veterans of Italy. He spoke to the men and told them what was afoot. And then he and his staff of Generals marched into the Parliament House of the Ancients. He advanced to the bar of the Parliament.

"Citizen representatives," he cried, "the Republic was on the point of perishing. Your decree has saved it. Woe to those who shall attempt to foment disorder! Aided by all my comrades in arms here assembled around me, I shall find means to prevent their efforts.

"In vain examples are sought in the past to disturb your minds. Nothing in history resembles the eighteenth century, and nothing in this century resembles its close.

"We will have the Republic; *we will have it founded on genuine liberty, on the representative system.*

"We will have it, I swear, in my own name and in the names of my comrades in arms."

All the Generals clapped their hands on their swords: "We all swear."

Here was a challenge indeed to the Men of the Terror and to King Mob. "Mahomet" Sieyès, the Plan-maker, must have congratulated himself, as he listened to that speech, on his new partner. At last, it seemed, he had made a plan which was going to be carried into effect. Napoleon left the hall and remounted his horse and instantly the Ancients adjourned, so as to be well out of the way before the arrival of the members of the Lower House, the Five Hundred, for the meeting at eleven o'clock. The Man reviewed the troops which he had ordered to be paraded before him. He made a short speech to the soldiers, who shouted: "*Bonaparte for ever!*"

Immense crowds had now gathered to see the Man and his soldiers. The morning sun, ascending in a cloudless sky, filled the autumn air with showers of gold. And through the showers of gold the members of the Lower House, the Five Hundred, made their way to their eleven-o'clock rendezvous. The news of what was afoot had got about now and the Men of the Terror were gasping with

rage and fury and despair. They looked on Napoleon's tall grenadiers, as they passed into the palace, and gnashed their teeth. The shouts of "*Bonaparte for ever!*" —that cry which was echoing from one end of France to the other—followed and mocked them. What chance, now, had the tiger-spring which they had been planning? And to think that they had gone to Bonaparte themselves and asked him to lead them—that they had been so mad as to show their hands to the enemy!

It was not only the Men of the Terror who were members of the Five Hundred who thought and spoke in this way, President Gohier and Director Moulins were also gnashing their teeth in their official apartments in the Luxembourg Palace. They rushed to the rooms of their colleague Barras. "Wine-women-and-song" was in his bath, scarcely awake yet to the events of the day.

"You will stand by us?" Gohier and Moulins cried.

"Of course." Barras rolled in the warm water. "That damned fellow Bonaparte has deceived us," he declared.

Gohier and Moulins retired to allow their colleague to dress. Meanwhile their friends, who were members of the Five Hundred, were making things hum in the Parliament House. They had just heard from the lips of their President, Lucien Bonaparte, what had been decided about the removal of the Parliament to St. Cloud. And they were yelling themselves hoarse with fury.

"Silence," cried Lucien. "The law forbids that we should discuss the decision of the Ancients on this matter."

That was true, and every one knew it was true. "Mahomet" Sieyès, the Plan-maker, had left nothing to chance. The yells subsided. Lucien adjourned the sitting until the next day, at St. Cloud. The members trooped out again into the golden sunlight and went hurrying away through the ranks of the tall grenadiers. The Men of the Terror rushed off to their slums and kennels to "rouse" the people—that is to say, to call King Mob to their assistance. They would call together the twelve borough

councils of Paris—always good rallying points for mobs; they would ring the bells; they would call the citizens to arm themselves with their scythes and their pikes and their skewers—as in the days of old when bloody Robespierre was marching at their head.

Alas for their hopes! All this might have been possible, was, indeed, only too probable, twenty-four hours ago. It was impossible now. For the Men of the Terror had not risen early enough to be up before "Mahomet" the Plan-maker and his partner Napoleon. Lo and behold, the borough councils of Paris had all been abolished overnight. There were proclamations on the walls of the city, on the doors of the houses, telling the good folk to keep calm and warning them that the Men of the Terror were on the war-path again; there were tall grenadiers posted at every rallying place. Yet in spite of all these precautions, small riots began to break out and there were secret meetings and the hasty collecting together of armed bands. The Men of the Terror would not believe that it could be possible that "Mahomet" the Plan-maker had stolen a march on them.

Meanwhile "Mahomet" was closeted with Napoleon in the latter's headquarters in the palace of the Tuileries. It was not for nothing that Napoleon had been appointed by the Ancients Commander-in-Chief of the Troops in Paris. The Man was already taking measures to preserve the peace of the city entrusted to his care and to prevent King Mob from breaking loose. It was by his orders that the tall grenadiers were guarding the danger areas.

"Mahomet" the Plan-maker had already resigned his membership of the "Big Five" and his faithful Roger Ducos had done likewise. But a third resignation was necessary if the "Big Five" was to be out of action. It was necessary at once to get into touch with Barras. "Mahomet" sent off Talleyrand, accompanied by an Admiral, to bring persuasion to bear on "Wine-women-and-song." Talleyrand had no sooner gone off on this mission when Barras's secretary came rushing into Napoleon's room to demand explanations of what was happening.

"What have you done with the Directors?" he cried.

Napoleon answered him:

"What have the Directors done with that France which I left so brilliant? I left her peace; I have found war. I left victories; I have found defeats. I left the millions of Italy and I have found despoiling laws and wretchedness. What is become of the 100,000 French whom I knew, all my companions in glory? They are dead."

Barras's secretary slunk out of the room. At the door he learned that his master had thrown in his hand and given his resignation to Talleyrand. The "Big Five" had ceased to exist, just as "Mahomet" the Plan-maker had arranged that it should cease to exist. There was, now, no Government in France.

No sooner was this news of the surrender of "Wine-women-and-song" Barras brought to Napoleon than the two Men of the Terror who had been members of the "Big Five," Gohier and Moulins, rushed into his room.

"You have come to resign also?" asked the Man.

"We have come to save the Republic."

Napoleon stiffened. He demanded with what they proposed to save the Republic. At the same instant a courier ran into the room with a note. Napoleon tore it open. It informed him that King Mob had broken loose in one district of the city and that General Santerre, the man who had been the rigorous jailer of poor King Louis and who had summoned him to the scaffold, was acting as chief disturber. The Man turned to Moulins:

"You are a kinsman of Santerre?"

"Not a kinsman, a friend."

"I am informed that he is exciting violence. Tell him that at the very first movement I will have him shot."

The day closed in peace. King Mob had been quelled. That night Napoleon made it plain to "Mahomet" the Plan-maker that, in his view, France needed, for the moment, a strong hand—a stronger hand than was

provided for even in "Mahomet's" plan. "Mahomet" then advised that forty of the leaders of the Men of the Terror in the Five Hundred should be arrested during the night.

Napoleon shook his head.

"I swore in the morning," he said, "to protect the national representation; I will not, this evening, violate my oath."

## CHAPTER XLI

### THE HOWLING OF THE WOLVES

Next day, November 10, Paris witnessed a spectacle as strange as the coming of poor King Louis to his capital surrounded by the fishwives and the prostitutes. Before dawn there were carriages on the road to St. Cloud. And when the sun rose his beams fell on a road crowded with marching men. There were troops on the road to St. Cloud, and endless equipages and women dressed in their gayest clothes. But the troops stationed round Marie Antoinette's palace would admit to the grounds of the palace only the members of the Parliament and the officers.

"Mahomet" had arrived early with the faithful Roger. He had left behind him, at the palace gates, a travelling carriage, horsed with six horses, and ready for instant departure; the Plan-maker had not omitted the possibility of failure from his calculations. And none knew better than he what failure was likely to mean. The horror of Robespierre and of the fate of Robespierre lay, living, in his bosom.

He soon found that he had reason for anxiety, for the Men of the Terror were roused to madness. Glaring eyes assailed him from the lawns where the members of both Houses of Parliament walked about waiting for the halls, they were to occupy, to be opened. "Mahomet" hurried to the office where Napoleon, as Commander-in-Chief, had his headquarters. He found his partner anxious and rather uneasy. Napoleon told him that some of the Generals, especially Augereau the big fencing-master, and Bernadotte, the future King of Sweden, who were known

to be friendly to the Men of the Terror, had arrived at St. Cloud.

"But I have given orders that the first man who tries to tamper with the troops will be shot."

News arrived that the two Houses of Parliament had begun to sit: the Ancients and the Five Hundred. The latter were in the orangery. Would they pass the motions appointing the "Big Three"? Messengers came running in. Already there was trouble in both Houses. In the Five Hundred the trouble was appalling—everything, in fact, was lost. . . . Napoleon demanded to be told what had happened.

The Men of the Terror in the Five Hundred were shouting down everybody who tried to speak, even Lucien, their President. They were shouting: "Down with the Dictators! No Dictatorship. We are not afraid of bayonets. . . ." They were taking an oath, like the great oath of the Tennis Court, at Versailles, never to yield to force. Even Lucien, the President, had been compelled to take the oath.

Napoleon and "Mahomet" looked at one another, and their eyes were anxious. If this continued the Men of the Terror would triumph as, long ago, they had triumphed before over the "Dreamers." The Revolution, France, would be lost. The Man declared that he would go, in turn, to each of the Houses of Parliament and try to explain matters. On the way to the Ancients he met Augereau, the fencing-master, who had been his Lieutenant all through the campaign of Italy. Augereau was sneering:

"Now you are in a tight corner."

Napoleon glanced at him proudly:

"Things were worse," he answered, "at Arcole."

He strode into the hall of the Ancients and came to the bar. He was as pale as death. He began to speak.

There are many versions of that speech. There are some, who heard it, who say that it was not a speech at all, but merely a few broken sentences stammered out in extreme agitation. Be that as it may, it achieved its purpose. The Ancients were won over. Napoleon, with

a few grenadiers, went to the orangery where the Five Hundred under the chairmanship of Lucien were assembled. He told his grenadiers to wait at the door. He entered the hall alone and advanced towards his brother. His cheeks were still as pale as ashes, but his step was firm. At sight of him the wolves of Robespierre uttered such a howl of fury as seemed to tear the rafters asunder.

" What ! " they shouted. " Soldiers here ! Arms ! What is this ? Down with the Dictator ! To hell with the Tyrant. . . . "

The Man paused, hesitating. After all, these were the members of the Parliament of the Revolution : the representatives of the French people. And he had sworn to act according to law.

The wolves of Robespierre grew fiercer. Suddenly half a dozen of them sprang from their seats. They leaped against the frail form in the gangway. Fists were raised. There was the gleam of steel. Napoleon drew a step back, while Lucien, dressed in his Roman *toga*, rose, and shouted for " Order."

" Is it for this," yelled the wolves, " that you have conquered ? All your laurels are blasted . . . your glory is changed to shame. Begone ! "

That word filled the throats of all the Men of the Terror.

" *Begone ! Begone ! Begone ! Begone !* "

The Man glanced about him ; he who had not faltered at the Bridge of Lodi, in the swamps of Arcole, on the molten sands of the desert, faltered amid this ravening. He put up his hands to shield his face. The wolves laid their hands on him.

And suddenly his grenadiers were round about him, shielding his beloved body with their bodies and receiving the blows which, had they not come, he would have received. It is said that some of the honest soldiers were wounded ; it is certain that one of them had his uniform torn from his back. The grenadiers clasped the

Man in their arms just as they had clasped him, once before, in the hell of Arcole, when he offered his body as the target of the foes of France. They bore him to the door and set him, once again, on his horse.

But the howling of the wolves followed him. Now they were shouting again their awful cry of the days of blood: "Outlaw him! Outlaw him!" that cry which had sounded the death-knell of hundreds—of Robespierre himself, their own leader.

Lucien tore off his *toga*, the symbol of his office.

"You would not listen to him," he shouted. "He came to explain his conduct, to make you acquainted with his mission, to answer all your questions. . . ."

He flung his *toga* away.

"Wretches, would you force me to outlaw my own brother? I resign the chair and I will go to the bar to defend him who is accused."

Napoleon, on his horse at the window, heard that speech. He saw his brother's danger and sent ten of his grenadiers to Lucien's help. The President of the Five Hundred was brought in safety to the open, while the Men of the Terror howled their triumph after him. Lucien and Napoleon and "Mahomet" the Plan-maker met together in front of the palace. Napoleon still hesitated.

"For God's sake let us act," cried "Mahomet"; "there are the soldiers."

The Man heard the taunt. None knew better than he that unless action was taken at once everything was lost. Yet to use soldiers against the Parliament of the People!

But Lucien, the fire-eater, had no hesitation. The wolves of Robespierre were not the Parliament. He himself was the President of the Parliament and he had been attacked and shouted down. He mounted a horse and bade Napoleon mount also, telling him what was in his mind. They galloped to the troops.

"Soldiers," cried Lucien, "the Council of the Five Hundred is dissolved. It is I, their President, that tell you so. Assassins have taken possession of the hall of

meeting and have done violence to the Majority. I summon you to march and clear it of them."

The soldiers shouted, "*Long live Bonaparte!*" but still they did not move.

Lucien drew his sword. He raised it aloft.

"I swear," he shouted, "that I will stab my own brother to the heart if he ever attempt anything against the liberty of Frenchmen."

That was enough. The officers gave the orders. Murat at the head of the grenadiers, who had their bayonets fixed, rushed into the hall. At sight of them the wolves howled anew; but already the drums had begun to roll—"*Grenadiers, forward!*"

The bayonets flashed. The Men of the Terror flung themselves against the windows and went leaping to the ground. Some of them ran to the passages, crowding and jostling in the narrow doorways.

The hall of the Five Hundred was empty.

Lucien mounted the platform and resumed his *toga*.

The members who were left, who were friendly, passed the motion which created the new Government of the "Big Three": Napoleon and "Mahomet" and Roger Ducos.

At midnight the Ancients also passed the motion. At midnight on November 10, 1799, Napoleon became the Master and the Ruler of France.

The Eighteenth Century was already tottering to its end.

The Man of the Nineteenth Century had arrived.

END OF BOOK II

# BOOK III

## THE PEACEMAKER

"Do you know what I call this peace? An experimental peace; for it is nothing else. But it was unavoidable."

KING GEORGE III OF GREAT BRITAIN ON THE PEACE OF AMIENS BETWEEN FRANCE AND BRITAIN.

## CHAPTER XLII

### THE RIDDLE OF THE PINS

France, when Napoleon took command of her destiny, was back in the days of Danton. The Kings were at her throat—the Kings by land and the King by sea; gnawing at her heart were the wolves of Robespierre and also the wolves of Royalism. The walls of steel had been rebuilt. The armies were dispirited and hundreds of soldiers were deserting. Italy was lost, thrown back to the hands which oppressed, and secured to those hands by an English fleet. Finally there was bankruptcy.

Could the Revolution, in these circumstances, be saved?

Napoleon believed that it could, and because he believed France hoped. His first act, as Consul, was to propose to the Kings that they should make peace and leave France to pursue her own destiny.

Here is his letter to King George III of England:

"Bonaparte, First Consul of the Republic, to His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland.

"Called by the wishes of the French nation to occupy the first magistracy of the French Republic, I deem it desirable, in entering on its functions, to make a direct communication to your Majesty.

"Must the war, which for four years has ravaged every part of the world, be eternal? Are there no means of coming to an understanding?

"How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, more powerful and stronger than is necessary for their safety and independence, sacrifice to the idea of a vain grandeur, the benefits of commerce, of internal prosperity

and domestic happiness ? How is it they do not feel that peace is as glorious as it is necessary ?

" These sentiments cannot be strangers to the heart of your Majesty, who rules over a free nation with no other view than to render it happy.

" Your Majesty will only see in this overture my sincere desire effectually to contribute to a general pacification by a prompt step, free and untrammelled by those forms which, necessary, perhaps, to disguise the apprehensions of feeble states, only prove, in the case of strong ones, the mutual desire to deceive.

" France and England, by abusing their strength, may for a long time yet, to the misery of all other nations, defer the moment of their absolute exhaustion ; but I will venture to say that the fate of all civilized nations depends on the end of a war which envelopes the whole world.

" BONAPARTE."

Lord Grenville answered this letter on behalf of King George III. He said that his Master desired that a prince of that race of Kings who, during so many centuries had known how to maintain the prosperity of the (French) nation at home and to ensure consideration and respect abroad, should remount the throne of France. He exhorted the first Consul to establish, with proofs, the legitimacy of his Government.

England, in other words, was to go on fighting to put " Louis XVIII " back on the throne and to restore the " Glittering Beings " to Versailles ; an object which she achieved fifteen years later when the same Louis XVIII came slinking back to Paris " among the baggage "—as Talleyrand said—of Wellington's victorious army.

" Louis XVIII," the brother of poor Louis XVI, was, however, at this very time, quite ready to do a deal with Napoleon, no matter whether Napoleon's Government was " legitimate " or not. Here is a letter which the gracious Prince wrote to the soldier :

" You must have known for a long time past, General, that my esteem is yours. Should you doubt that I be not susceptible to the claims of gratitude, fix the place you

wish to occupy and dispose of the fortunes of your friends. As to my principles, I am a Frenchman; clement by character, my reason will render me still more so. No, the Victor of Lodi, of Castiglione and of Arcole, the Conqueror of Italy, cannot prefer a vain celebrity to glory. Nevertheless you are losing precious time; we can assure the glory of France. I say 'we,' because I shall need Bonaparte for that and because he could not accomplish it without me. General, Europe is watching you; glory awaits you; and I am impatient to restore peace to my country."

The Man replied:

"I have received your letter, Sir. I thank you for the agreeable things which you say in it. You should not desire your return to France; you would have to walk over a hundred thousand corpses. Sacrifice your interests to the peace and happiness of France. History will take this into consideration. I am by no means indifferent to the misfortunes of your family. I shall hear with pleasure that you are at peace in your retirement and will gladly contribute to assure this tranquillity."

Louis looked on France as his private property. He looked on the Revolution as a thing which had robbed him and on Napoleon as a receiver of stolen goods. And his attitude was the attitude, also, of every King in Europe and of every lord and lordling in Europe. Every King in Europe was determined to bring the "Receiver of Stolen Goods" to "Justice" in spite of the fact that the whole French nation had chosen him as its leader. Nations counted for nothing, at that time, against Kings—just as, in every army except the French Army, soldiers counted for little against officers. Napoleon abolished flogging in his army, saying:

"Whatever debases a man cannot be serviceable. What sense of honour can a man have who is flogged before his comrades? When a soldier has been debased by stripes he cares little for his own reputation or the honour of his country. After an action I assembled the officers and

soldiers and inquired who had proved themselves heroes. Such as were able to read and write I promoted. Those who were not, I ordered to study five hours a day until they had learned a sufficiency, and then promoted them. Thus, I substituted honour and emulation for terror and the lash. . . . The English soldier is brave, none more so. . . . In place of the lash I would discipline them by honour. . . . What might not be hoped from the English Army if each who behaved well had the chance of becoming a General some day ? "

Napoleon, as is well known, thought highly of the soldiers of England. His instincts resented the system of punishment by flogging in which every European Government but his own believed and which was not abolished in England until half-a-century later. Between men holding such different ideas there can be nothing in common. The ideas of the English Government of the year 1800 were, in all things, reactionary. It was only to be expected that the Government of King George III —the King who had lost America because he and his Ministers refused to regard it as other than an English farm—would refuse even to talk of peace with Bonaparte, the receiver of the stolen goods of the Louis'.

It was not so, however, with America, the great sister Republic. Napoleon's peace letters to George III and to the Austrian Emperor earned him only contempt. But his peace proposals to America were received courteously and were responded to. On February 7, 1800, Napoleon ordered France to go into mourning for George Washington and sent a wreath to be placed on the tomb of that other soldier of liberty. In March peace was made with America. The Man was overjoyed at this. Nor did the refusal of the Kings to listen to him greatly distress him. He had not expected them to listen to him. He had merely felt it to be his duty to give them the chance to do so.

He also felt it his duty to give the people of France an opportunity of confirming or rejecting his leadership. He and " Mahomet " Sieyès and Roger had been appointed

" provisional " Consuls. " Mahomet " instantly set about making a new plan of permanent government, but this plan was too subtle and too complicated for a dangerous world. Another plan, Napoleon's, took its place, and " Mahomet," who rejected it, accepted the gifts of an estate and a Senatorship and—perhaps with a sense of relief—retired with Roger from the field. The " Big Three " was recast. Napoleon became, for ten years, " First Consul," and he had with him Cambacérès, most wily of lawyers, and the honest Lebrun. He asked the three million French voters to express their views on his Consulship.

There voted :

| | |
|---|---|
| For Napoleon's Consulship .. | 3,001,007. |
| Against .. .. .. .. | 1,526. |

The people of France, at any rate, did not look on Napoleon as a receiver of stolen goods. By this overwhelming vote they gave him their confidence. He began, instantly, to deserve it. Civil war was still raging in La Vendée, but within a month of the coming to leadership of Napoleon it began to die down. The Man then flung himself with all his ardour into the reform of the Government all over France—on which, as he saw, depended the strength and happiness and the wealth of the country. Government and governed were brought into close touch with one another and men of talent and honour were appointed to all the official positions. Not only so, but these men were chosen from all the parties and not only from the party which had given Napoleon help.

" Citizens," Napoleon declared, " the Revolution is now anchored to the principles which gave it birth."

Already France could see that her Man meant to serve her and not any group or gang. Every good Frenchman, no matter what his political opinion or his religious faith might be, was the friend of the Head of the State. France thrilled with wonder and with joy at this know-

ledge, and from that time onwards, in millions of humble homes throughout the land, Napoleon was thought of and spoken of only as the Man (*L'Homme*). When, eleven years later, a son was born to him, the peasant folk called that child "The Son of the Man." Even the soldiers' nickname, "Little Corporal," was not more eloquent of love.

Napoleon and Josephine were now living in apartments in the Luxembourg Palace, where Barras and his friends had lived. But, on the day after the votes of France calling him to leadership had been counted, he changed his residence. On February 19, 1800, the First Consul took up his abode in the palace of the Tuileries, from which, eight years before, King Louis and Queen Marie Antoinette had been snatched away by Danton's howling mob.

France saw the change and rejoiced at it. For the change meant that the Men of the Terror had found their master and that the Royalists need no longer apply. Neither blue blood, nor bayonets, nor Foreign Kings, nor the howls of King Mob, nor Paris herself, but the peaceful votes of 3,001,007 Frenchmen, in all the districts of France (against 1,526) had called the Man to that palace and to that power of which the palace was the symbol.

I would like my reader to ponder on this fact, for it is of vital importance. Nearly all the historians of Napoleon say of his coming to live in the palace that "the son of the Corsican lawyer lay down in the bed of 100 Kings"—or some such stuff, as if, at last, the "Cinderella Man" had arrived at the Prince's ball. The truth is so utterly different from that. Napoleon came to the palace not as a "Cinderella Man" but as the spirit of France, and of the Revolution and of Democracy. Those hideous savages, who had dragged King Louis away from it, were able only to destroy. The real spirit of the new France, the spirit of ordered liberty, was unknown to them, and hence, during their time of power, there was no leadership in France except the leadership of Terror, of gangs and parties, strong to-day but broken and vanished to-morrow.

The Man came wearing the crown of the nation's love and girded with the sword of the nation's will. He came because he had smitten the Kings and quelled the gangs; and he came humbly, knowing as no other but himself in all France knew, how terrible was the burden which he had that day taken up. "To be here," he said, "is nothing. We've got to stay here."

The first instalment of the burden was already pressing on his shoulders. There were 150,000 Austrian soldiers in Northern Italy, on his glorious battlefields of three years ago, making ready to invade France, and there was another immense Austrian Army on the Rhine fired with a similar resolve. An English fleet in the Mediterranean was co-operating. France was at war with England, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Naples, the Pope, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, and Holland. Her only real friend on earth was America.

Peace, therefore, could be won only by the sword. Either Napoleon must fight or see France invaded and the "Glittering Beings" brought back in triumph to Versailles. He resolved to fight. He sent Moreau, that "dour" man, in Scottish phrase, to take command on the Rhine. His own eyes were on Italy; on the mighty "garter" of the High Alps which girdles the extreme north of that country. The Army of Italy, once so strong, was now cribbed and confined in the city of Genoa. It occupied merely the "knee-cap" of that "leg" which once, no less effectively than the Alps themselves, it had gartered. And the Austrians were, clearly, about to take Genoa and strike from there along the Riviera coast.

The Man remained in Paris watching the two Austrian armies but himself making no sign. His old schoolfellow Bourrienne came to see him one day, in that room of his in the Tuileries Palace, with its huge, box-like desk with the griffin legs, an ancestor of the roll-top variety, and the settee covered with green taffeta on which, as a rule, Napoleon sat and beside which stood, invariably, the small table for his letters. The Man asked Bourrienne

what was going to happen, and on being told that Bourrienne did not know, called for a big map of Italy from his "map-room," which communicated with his study.

The map was unrolled on the floor and immediately Napoleon lay down full length on it and told his friend to do the same.

"He then stuck into it pins, the heads of which were tipped with wax, some red and some black. . . . When he had stationed the enemy's corps and drawn up the pins with the red heads on the points where he hoped to bring his own troops, he said to me:

"'Where do you think I shall beat Melas?' [the Austrian General].

"'How the devil should I know?'

"'Why, look here, you dolt. Melas is at Alexandria with his headquarters. There he will remain until Genoa surrenders. He has in Alexandria his magazines, his hospitals, his artillery, and his reserves. Crossing the Alps here [pointing to the great Mount St. Bernard] I shall fall upon Melas, cut off his communications with Austria, and meet him here in the plains of the Scrivia.'"

That day of the pins was March 17, 1800. Three months later, with men instead of with pins, the plan was carried into effect. A world, thrilled and amazed, heard the tremendous name of Marengo. It was a simple plan —merely to cross the "garter" of the High Alps, near its centre, and so "coop up" the Austrian Army gathered behind the "knee-cap" for its operations against Genoa. But the simplicity ended with the plan itself. It is one thing to stick a pin in a map; it is another to hide from your enemy the fact that you mean to get round behind him and so cut him off from his home country; and it is still another to transport an immense army with its guns across the Alps past the Hospice of the good Monks of St. Bernard.

The Man opened his tremendous game with a little of that "play" of which he was the supreme master. He began to create a "dummy" army at the town of Dijon. This army might be sent to the Rhine; again, it might be

sent to help the French in Genoa. It might be sent through the Alps. All these possibilities filled the Austrian spies in France with the keenest interest, and very soon the town of Dijon was swarming with spies.

Clever fellows those spies! They looked at the "dummy" army, with its poor old reservists and its line of feeble boys, and they chuckled.

"A dummy," they said. "We are not so easily deceived as this Bonaparte thinks."

And at once they sent messages to their masters assuring them that the Army of Reserve, as it was called, was merely a ghost set up to frighten fools.

"*There is no Army of Reserve*," declared the clever spies in chorus.

Had they travelled to the shores of the Lake of Geneva they would have felt less sure. On those quiet shores a very quiet army was gathering—not an army of old men and boys, but an army of picked troops. The pass of the Great St. Bernard was already being patrolled by French soldiers.

On May 6, after he had suppressed sixty-three of the wildest of the Paris newspapers, leaving only ten to supply the news, Napoleon set out, very quietly, to go to Geneva. He arrived at that town three days later. And then the real Army of the Reserve began that amazing march which for a hundred years has held the wonder of the world. The guns were dragged over the snows in hollowed tree trunks, hauled by a hundred men each. And, when human powers flagged and human nerves failed, the drums beat the charge. The Napoleon touch! The same instinct which had dictated this order in Cairo:

"Every day at noon, on the squares opposite the hospitals, will be played by the regimental bands, various national airs, which inspire the sick with gaiety and recall to their memory the most inspiring moments of their past campaigns."

The drums of the St. Bernard made weak arms strong again and warmed chill hearts. And when the Hospice of

the good Monks was reached, there was bread, cheese, and wine in readiness for brave men. The soldiers knew who it was who had thought of that detail of comfort and encouragement and blessed the name of the "Little Corporal."

They were not mistaken, and their enthusiasm repaid the kindness. Never was an army so gay, so dauntless, so confident; the grim Alpine pass rang with the marching songs of France, the immortal hymns of victory of the Soldiers of Napoleon.

On May 20 the Man himself crossed the pass. He and his staff actually slid down the slippery tracks left by the passing of his army. Before the wretched Austrian Commander, still at the "knee-cap," had any idea what was happening, Napoleon had once more entered the city of Milan and had cut him off from communication with his native Austria. The whole Austrian Army was caught in a trap.

Melas, the Austrian General, must turn now and fight for his life—for his way home. By a single stroke the danger of an invasion of France had been entirely removed, and this in spite of the fact that Genoa had surrendered and the French Army within it had been forced to retire. The Austrian General, chilled with amazement, turned instantly. There was the preliminary victory of Montebello—Lannes's victory—at which the Man was not present until the close of the action. Five days later, on the field of Marengo, just where the pins had indicated, the two armies came face to face.

There is no battle like Marengo—the battle which was lost and won again; the utter defeat which became the overwhelming victory; the triumph which gave the name of Napoleon and his Generals to imperishable fame.

The Man did not reach the battlefield till eleven o'clock, for he had been busy sending off a portion of his army under General Desaix, to carry out a certain manœuvre. For once his information about what was happening was imperfect. He rode on to the field dressed in that green cloak which became known afterwards as the "Cloak of

[*Photo: Bulloz, Paris.*

BONAPARTE AT THE CROSSING OF THE ALPS.
From the picture by David at Versailles.

Marengo," and which, twenty-one years later, at St. Helena, was laid on his coffin. The spectacle which greeted his eyes was indeed a spectacle of horror. He had just divided his army, sent away a large part of it, and here was the whole of Melas's forces already engaged in cutting what remained to him to pieces.

He was forced to order a retreat. It was bloody beyond words. By midday the position was desperate; by one o'clock the battle was over. The French had been driven three miles beyond the village of Marengo. The greater part of their cavalry had been destroyed. More than two-thirds of their cannon had been captured. Only fragments of their infantry remained. Six thousand of Napoleon's soldiers lay dead and wounded on the field.

Some one has told how, about one o'clock, he saw Napoleon seated by the side of the road, slashing his boot with a riding whip the while he dictated orders. Disaster so complete and so overwhelming seemed to have dazed him. But that eagle brain was not dazed, as the event was soon to show.

Desaix, the faithful Desaix, though he had been sent away with his men, had heard the sound of the guns of Marengo and had turned back, recognizing that he would be wanted. And General Melas, that brave old hero of seventy, thinking that he had won—as indeed he had—had given up the supreme command and gone away to his headquarters to rest and announce his victory. The Austrians were not following up their triumph. At four o'clock in the afternoon Desaix reached Napoleon and the spirits of the Man were renewed. A council was held. Napoleon was in favour of fighting, but his officers were against that course—all except Desaix. The decision to fight was taken. "Soldiers," cried Napoleon, "remember that my custom is to sleep on the battlefield."

Two hours later the Austrians, surprised in their self-confidence, were hurled back, broken and routed to Marengo. Their whole army was utterly destroyed. But Desaix fell on the glorious field. The following morning General Melas sent an officer to Napoleon offering to

surrender. He promised to take himself and his army out of Italy.

Thus, in one month, Italy was freed again from the hands which oppressed. All that had been lost by the folly of the "Big Five" had been restored. The ring of steel was broken once more. Napoleon wrote:

"To-day, whatever our Paris atheists may say, I am going in full state to the *Te Deum* that is to be sung in the Cathedral of Milan."

## CHAPTER XLIII

### PEACE ON EARTH

On the morrow of Marengo, Napoleon gave himself with all his passionate soul to the cause of peace. France, he saw, had desperate need of peace, and the need of Europe was scarcely less desperate. He resolved that the Revolution should extend its hands to all Europe, offering, instead of its armies, its ideals and its hopes.

But he was no mere Dreamer, this Man of France. Already a mighty new Plan, greater by far than all his plans of war, was formed in his mind. France should have peace, but not peace of the hand only, not merely a truce on her frontiers and her coasts. The peace of Napoleon was to be all-embracing: peace of the hand, peace of the heart, and peace of the soul. With his grey eyes full of this vision he rode from his battlefield back to Milan. The Italian townspeople were waiting for him as for their saviour. In every street there were displayed great banners bearing the legend, "Liberator of Italy." Napoleon entered that Serbolini palace where, before, he had faced, alone, the fact that the woman he loved had no love for him in her heart.

On June 25 he set out for Paris. That city was wild with joy of his victory and was making ready to welcome him. Had he not, in thirty days, broken down again the wall of steel and humbled in the dust the boastings and the hatred of the Kings? But the Man had already put away from him the temptation of personal glory. Not as a conqueror but as peacemaker would he come, he who was able now, to make war or to make peace according to his will.

"I shall arrive in Paris unexpectedly," he wrote. "I

want no triumphal arches or any such flim-flam. The only real triumph is the satisfaction of the people."

And to make sure that he was obeyed the Man of Peace arrived in the capital at midnight. Next morning, July 3, he was back at work again sitting huddled up on the taffeta-covered sofa in his study. Already his Peace Plan filled all his mind.

In the days and weeks and months which followed Europe witnessed the strangest and most moving spectacle of her history; the spectacle of one man healing the wounds of a whole world; of the greatest soldier of all the ages calling on his fellows to put strife and bitterness away from them, and to lift up their hearts to Heaven in a universal prayer for peace on earth and good will towards men.

Peace of the soul was given the first place in this tremendous evangel. Napoleon was Letitia's son, the son of a pious mother. He had not forgotten his two excellent grandmothers nor his good Uncle Lucien, the Archdeacon of Ajaccio. He remembered that Grandmamma Bonaparte had heard a Mass every day for each of her grandchildren, and he remembered also what joy all these good and simple folk had found in the exercise of their faith. Letitia's son knew that there were millions of honest and pious Frenchmen and Frenchwomen who felt just as his own folk had felt and whose hearts were sore because of the persecution of the Church and her priests.

What did these simple Christians know of the tangled philosophies of the day, of Robespierre's fatuous "acknowledgment"—made in a sky-blue coat and nankeen breeches—of the "Supreme Being"? What part had they in the defiling of the churches and the casting down of the altars? Their hearts yearned after the religion of their fathers and mothers, the religion which they desired to give to their children, the religion which gave them peace of soul and a spiritual anchorage, that Holy Roman and Apostolic Faith which down all the centuries had been the religion of France.

The Man had already made up his mind to bestow it on them. "First of all," he told his dumbfounded councillors, "I am going to raise up again in France, the altars of Holy Church."

There, indeed, was a challenge to the Men of the Terror who had yelled, through the horrid years, that France had no need of altars and had made, everywhere, public mock of religion. Napoleon was told, even by moderate-minded folk, that what he proposed could not be done. "It will ruin you."

"Very well, then," said the Man, "let me be ruined."

And in that spirit he dared, single-handed, to open negotiations with Pope Pius VI—a man whom, before he became Pope, he had met during his first Italian campaign. At that meeting the young General of the Revolution had recognized the sincere piety and simplicity of the aged Bishop, while the Bishop had felt his heart strangely moved by the profound and respectful advice which the "boy with the beautiful face" had given him.

I am ready, said Napoleon to the Pope, to re-establish the Catholic Church in France on the condition that we render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are His. I will have no interference by priests in my Government and I will have no persecution of other faiths.

The last point was emphasized with everybody. Many of you, the Man told his councillors, argue that, because different religious bodies contradict each other, therefore all are wrong and bad.

"Now, I should rather find them all good; all, at bottom, say the same thing. They are wrong only when they wish to forbid each other."

That is the Twentieth Century, and not the Nineteenth Century, speaking. It is a commonplace to-day that "the religions of the world are the languages of God," but in the year 1800 such a view was scarcely dreamed of. And so amid threats and curses, amid laughter and jeering, the plans for the raising again of her altars in France were carried through. And in the prayers of millions of

simple folk the name of the Man was spoken gratefully to Almighty God.

"My policy," said Napoleon, "is to govern men as the great number wish to be governed. That, I think, is the way to recognize the sovereignty of the people."

But peace of the soul is nothing without peace of the heart. Not only must the Revolution bow the knee to God, it must also forgive its enemies. The Man let it be known that he meant, at the earliest opportunity, to allow all the thousands of Frenchmen, lawyers and priests, who had been driven out of the country by Robespierre, and later by Barras, to return again—always excepting those who had taken up arms against their native land. This proposal was met with absolute horror, and the Man was told that he was betraying the Revolution.

Are not these exiles the friends of the "Glittering Beings"? Do you wish to restore Versailles?

Those exiles, said Napoleon, are Frenchmen, my fellow-countrymen and yours. They acted as their consciences compelled them to act, what we have to do is to convince them that the spirit of the Revolution, our spirit, is better than the spirit of the old world which it has replaced. Then they will settle down with us and help us to build a new and a nobler France.

There was none who could argue against the Man, for the sweetness of his spirit prevailed against any and every violent counsel. Beside the plan of this great practical Christian, this interpreter of the true spirit of the Revolution, the hate of the Men of the Terror was revealed in all its folly, the envy of the Royalists and of the Kings in all its baseness. And once again the heart of France was lifted up.

And even the Kings began to appear before the world holding olive branches in their hands. Napoleon's eye scrutinized these olive branches closely, for he was aware of the nature of the so-called "Peace Plan" of his enemies, which had been drawn up, before the recent war, by King George III of Britain and his Prime Minister, William Pitt. Pitt's plan aimed, quite frankly, at placing "King

Louis XVIII" on the throne of France. It therefore aimed at the destruction of the Revolution. And its details were scarcely less cynical than its outlines. Italy and the Italians were to be handed back to their Austrian owners like stolen sheep. The King of Sardinia was to have, once more, his beloved Piedmont and was also to be encouraged to "make a mouthful" of the little Republic of Genoa, which had hitherto enjoyed independence. Then, in Switzerland, the power was to be brought back to those old ruling families which, in that land of mountains, represented "blue blood." As for the Rhine and Belgium, Pitt hoped to see a swift return to the good old days when the power of France was held in check by multitudes of small states, banded together and placed under the "protection" of large kingdoms—the so-called Holy Roman Empire of which Voltaire wittily and truly said that it was neither Holy nor Roman nor an Empire.

This plan, as Napoleon could not but realize, was designed to provide the Kings with a series of "stepping-stones" by means of which they could, if the occasion arose, advance quickly and safely against France, for the ways into France are Italy, Switzerland, the Rhine, and Belgium. It became, therefore, the main object of the Man's peace policy to secure these "stepping-stone" states either as part of France herself or as countries tied to her by close bonds of friendship.

The victory of Marengo, and the victory of Hohenlinden ("On Linden when the sun was low"), which General Moreau won on the Rhine later in the year, made it possible to realize this object. In his treaty of peace with Austria Napoleon made it clear that he was going to do for France exactly what Pitt and the Kings had pledged themselves to do against her. He meant to turn Northern Italy into a separate, independent Republic of the Italian people, to join Piedmont to France as a sister, just as Corsica had been joined, to keep the Rhine as one of France's frontiers, and to secure that the enemies of the Revolution were not allowed to gain the ascendancy either in Switzerland or in Holland.

One is irresistibly reminded, in looking at this treaty with Austria, of the veterinary surgeon who tried to administer a pill to a horse by blowing the pill down the animal's throat with a blow-pipe. Unhappily the horse blew first! The Kings were forced to swallow their own medicine; the "stepping-stone" states which they had created as a means of invading France passed to Napoleon.

The Man had real hope now of securing a world-wide peace and this, the more so, because the Kings were quarrelling among themselves. Napoleon was well informed about these quarrels. He knew, for example, that the Emperor of Russia, Paul, usually known as "Mad Paul," was furiously angry with the Emperor of Austria, Francis, because Francis had not behaved well towards the troops which Paul had sent to his help. There were still a number of Russian prisoners in France. Napoleon clothed them in new uniforms and sent them back home.

That act of courtesy and of statesmanship delighted Paul, who promptly told Napoleon that he was sick of Francis and even more sick of King George III of England; Paul declared, too, that he had made up his mind not, any longer, to submit to having his ships searched by the British. The British King might talk about his "right of search," but he, Paul, recognized no such right. He did not even see why Britannia should continue to rule the waves.

Napoleon was, naturally, in full agreement with these views, and he listened with pleasure while Paul told Britannia exactly what he thought of her and of her claims to be entitled to stop other people's ships on the high seas in order to make sure that they were not loaded with supplies destined for France. He must have smiled, too, when Paul demanded of King George III that the English, who had captured Malta from the French, should at once give it back to its Knights who had chosen him, Paul, as their Grand Master.

Napoleon knew that King George III would not, in any circumstances, fall in with Paul's wishes; but he can scarcely have been prepared for the measures which the

mad Emperor instantly took to punish King George for his refusal. Even the Man of Marengo must have caught his breath when he saw the Kings of Sweden and Denmark standing side by side with Paul to resist by force of arms the " Right of Search," and when he heard that Paul had refused to allow a single grain of Russian wheat to be shipped to England. For this meant that the whole Baltic Sea was closed to Britannia ; it might easily come to mean a famine in the great cities of England, since England did not grow enough wheat to feed her people.

Napoleon learned, from his spies, with what great anxiety the British Government had heard of the closing of the Baltic and the order forbidding the shipment of wheat. He was told that King George had been forced to issue public proclamations to his people begging them to show " the greatest economy and frugality " in the use of bread, and that King George had, himself, set an example of economy by ordering that none but stale bread should be served on the royal table and that the distillation of whisky from grain should cease. The price of wheat in London had risen from £2 10*s*. a quarter to £7 15*s*.

Christmas was drawing near. On Christmas Eve, 1800, Napoleon and Josephine went to the Opera in Paris. Their carriage had just passed through the Rue Nicaise when a terrific explosion shook that street to its foundations. The bodies of men and women, murdered and mutilated, were flung in every direction.

Wild rumour spread her wings. In the streets, in the cafés, in the theatres, in the Opera House itself, it was positively asserted that the Saviour of France was killed. The audience in the Opera House, to which the sound of the bomb had penetrated, grew sick with fear.

And then, suddenly, a thrill tingled in the bodies of these horrified men and women. They raised their eyes to the Consular box.

They saw, standing in the box, his wife's hand held in his hand, that slight figure of their hearts' desire.

Napoleon's grey eyes were unclouded by any fear.

Paris, that night, gave him all her love.

Some of the authors of the infernal machine were arrested and the whole abominable story unravelled. There were Royalists implicated—agents of the notorious Georges Cadoudal and also Robespierreans—for extremes are always liable to meet. Some punishments were inflicted; some punishments, which had been ordered, were not inflicted, because Napoleon chose to forgive the culprits. Napoleon pursued his plans undeterred and even unconcerned as far, at any rate, as his personal safety was involved.

But he could not mistake the meaning of the infernal machine nor the fact that it had been flung by the hands of the Royalists. These men would not forgive the Saviour of the Revolution. He knew that they came from La Vendée—that is, from the western coasts of France—and he knew that their help and strength came from the Channel Islands, which were then crowded with the enemies of the Revolution. Why did England, free, liberty-loving England, shelter these desperadoes ?

Meanwhile there came strange news from England; news of the resignation of Pitt and news of another wondrous exploit of Nelson the Sea-Hawk. Nelson, with his telescope to his blind eye, had actually smashed the fleet of the King of Denmark at Copenhagen and so broken up Mad Paul's league against Britannia. The Baltic was open again to English ships. But, even so, Paul refused to sell his wheat. The price of wheat in London, Napoleon was told, remained at £7 16*s.* per quarter.

"They want," wrote Napoleon about the infernal machine, "to attack the Revolution by destroying me; I will defend it because I am the Revolution!"

## CHAPTER XLIV

### ALEXANDER

Paul, in fact, had achieved against England what all the navies in the world could not achieve. He had reduced her to famine and desperation.

That, Napoleon knew, was the real reason why Pitt—the Prime Minister—had resigned and why his place had been taken by the friends of Charles James Fox, who had always been in favour of making peace with France. The English King and the English War Lords and the English War Profiteers did not want to make peace with Napoleon—far from it; but neither did they want to be torn to pieces by the starving mobs of London. Peace with Napoleon was the only way of obtaining wheat from the Continent of Europe, so long as Paul continued to reign in Russia.

And so the British Government gave ear to Napoleon's proposal that peace should be made between England and France.

And then, just when that step had been taken, in a single night, everything was changed. Mad Paul was strangled in his palace at St. Petersburg by a group of officers who were the close friends of his son, Alexander.

With deep anxiety Napoleon realized that, now, the "will to peace" in England would be fatally weakened. For Paul's son, Alexander, was in all respects unlike his father. Alexander was known to be friendly to England and was suspected of being the enemy of France. Would King George refuse, now, to go on with the peacemaking?

News soon arrived that Alexander had changed all his father's plans; there was no longer any danger of starvation in London. Napoleon, who was making a

treaty with Holland, took the precaution to insert in it the proviso that his soldiers should remain in that "stepping-stone" state "*until the final conclusion of peace with England*"—a sign that he feared the worst. At the same time he sent off one of his friends to Russia to pay his respects to the new Emperor, the young Alexander.

Napoleon's friend reported that he had been well received and that Alexander was a good young man, full of love for the whole universe. Alexander had said that it was not true that he was fonder of King George than of Napoleon. He loved them both exactly the same. Indeed, he loved all men and all nations exactly the same. That was why he had opened the harbours of Russia to English ships. But, on the other hand, he did not approve of England's wish to keep the Island of Malta, because he loved the Knights of Malta to whom the island rightfully belonged. He had decided to give up the title of "Grand Master" of the Knights of which his father had been so proud, but he was going, instead, to call himself their "Protector." And he was going to protect them. As for the French people—well, he loved them too, but he did not approve of Napoleon's wish to add Piedmont to France, because he also loved Piedmont.

Alexander, who was very handsome and very beautiful, had bent down to the French Ambassador and added in a whisper:

"Do not repeat anything I now say to my ministers; be discreet; employ only trustworthy couriers. But tell General Bonaparte to send me men on whom I can rely. The most discreet relations will be found best suited to establish good feelings between the two Governments."

Alexander had smiled as he spoke, that sweet, uplifting smile of his. He had apparently meant the Frenchman to understand that other hearts, the hard hearts of his ministers, for example, were not so full of love as his own heart.

Napoleon experienced a sense of great uneasiness. *Alexander had not tried to keep his love for England a secret!*

Already King George had received rich benefits from him, all of which had inflicted harm on France. The Man's grey eyes became clouded. If peace was not made with England immediately, he began to see, it would never be made at all. For, in addition to obtaining wheat and getting his ships back into the Baltic, King George had just succeeded in capturing Egypt from the French.

## CHAPTER XLV

### HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

On October 1, 1801, the "Preliminaries of Peace," as they were called, between France and England were signed in London and sent off to Paris to be ratified. Said *The Times* of October 3:

"The public were so impatient to express their feelings on the occasion of the news of the Preliminaries of Peace being signed, that almost all the public streets were illuminated last night. This was evidently not the wish of the Government, who have deferred a general illumination until the ratification of them comes back from France. Accordingly none of the Public Offices were illuminated nor either of the theatres."

*The Times* of October 10, 1801, told how:

"The intelligence was announced to the inhabitants of Paris by discharge of artillery and was proclaimed by torchlight throughout the streets. At night there was a general illumination. Never was joy more fervently expressed."

On October 10, 1801, the news of the signing was brought to London. *The Times* of October 12, 1801, said:

"On Saturday morning, at 10 o'clock, General Daurostan [a mistake for Lauriston], *Chief de Brigade* in the Artillery and aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte, arrived at M. Otto's house in Hereford Street with the ratification. . . .

"After breakfast at M. Otto's, the General . . . proceeded to Reddish's Hotel in St. James St., where he dressed

and afterwards went to Downing St. On their way thither the populace took the horses from the carriage and drew it through the principal streets."

The English people and the French people, indeed, were both heartily sick of war and were ready to try to live together in friendship. The peace which had been outlined was honourable to both nations and bestowed benefit upon both ; for, whereas England gained almost the whole of India and the rich Island of Ceylon in addition to numerous smaller possessions, France obtained the promises from England that Egypt would be handed back to the Sultan of Turkey and that Malta would be restored to the Knights.

This last promise relieved Napoleon's mind, for he had feared greatly that England might use Malta, the strongest fortress in the whole Mediterranean, as a base for naval and military operations in the Adriatic in support of Francis of Austria.

The treaty itself—" the definitive treaty "—was signed at Amiens by Joseph who had also made the treaty with Austria. Amiens, then, which 117 years later, in 1918, during the Great War, Englishmen and Frenchmen were to defend with such transcendant heroism against the Kings of Prussia and of Austria, was the name-place of the first *entente* between the English and the French *peoples*.

On the Easter Sunday following the Treaty of Peace with England, Napoleon went to church in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame de Paris, that shrine of the soul of France in which, down the ages, her Kings and her statesmen had bowed the knee, in which, but a few years before, in the days of blood and blasphemy, a Parisian actress had been crowned and worshipped as " The Goddess of Reason " and men had ravished the Gothic silence with obscene jokes.

The Gothic silence was inviolate now, save for the *Te Deum* in celebration of the re-establishment of religious worship and of the Peace with England and all Europe.

Napoleon himself, grave and reverent, saw to it that

his generals and his councillors, whose presence he had commanded, kept their sneers or their jibes for the privacy of their own homes. Some of them were furious to the point of actually talking of murdering Napoleon—notably the ex-fencing-master Augereau, who hissed between his teeth the question :

" What of the men who died to put a stop to this sort of thing ? "

But the spirit of the Man quelled even Augereau. Mass, sung by Cardinal Caprara, the Pope's friend, began. There came the supreme moment of sacrifice announced by the silver notes of the *Sanctus* bell.

Napoleon the Peacemaker, in his green court-dress with its gold embroideries, and girded with that sword in the guard of which the Regent diamond, from the Royal Crown of France, glowed and flamed, fell on his knees. His generals, his ministers, the men of the Revolution, the men who had vowed that there was no God but reason, the men who had seen Robespierre strutting and mincing among the puddles of blood to " acknowledge the Supreme Being," fell on their knees.

The Blessed Sacrament was lifted up.

## CHAPTER XLVI

### THE PEACEBREAKERS

It is useless to make peace unless you are determined to keep it and to protect it. The Man had his plans of protection ready, for in spite of the expressions of good will he remained deeply anxious about the attitude of England.

His plans were so startling that, once again, he had to fight for them even against his own friends. Robespierre, he said, kept peace at home, among Frenchmen, by the terror which his red carts and his guillotines inspired. He protected peace at home with fear. I mean to protect peace at home with the love we all bear our country.

Napoleon then announced that "Legion of Honour," the ribands of which France still wears so proudly on her gallant breast and which, to-day, are worn also, with an equal pride, by many a brave Englishman. The Legion of Honour was to be conferred not on soldiers only, but on civilians too—on all who had nobly served.

Honours, said the Man, were given formerly, "only to the men of gentle birth. I will give them to the man who shall have served best in the Army, and in the State, or who shall have produced the finest works."

When his opponents called his Legion "Vanity," he replied:

"From Vanity great virtues may be made to spring."

After the love of country the knowledge that justice belongs to all is perhaps the greatest security which peace can have in any land. Napoleon, at any rate, thought so and caused to be begun the work on that "Code Napoleon," that body of law as great, in its own way, as the Common Law of England itself, by which, to this day, France is governed.

" We must, above all," cried the Man, " consecrate *the great principle of the French Revolution which is civil liberty —that is to say, equal justice in every branch. . . . All Frenchmen are equal, alike ; every citizen obeys the same law, appears before the same judge, suffers the same punishment, receives the same reward, pays the same taxes, is subject to the same military service, is eligible to, and attains the same rank, whatever may be his birth, his religion, or his place of origin.*

" These are the great social results of the Revolution which are well worth the troubles we have suffered in achieving them and which we must unalterably maintain.

" After those results there is one thing more which must be maintained with equal vigour, and that is the greatness of France. . . . For the maintenance of this greatness the struggle is not over ; it will be renewed."

What did these last four words mean ? Why did Napoleon say that the Wars of the Kings against the Revolution would be renewed ?

The answer to these questions is to be found in a series of events which began actually around the peace-table at Amiens. From that peace-table there had come to Napoleon a hint, from King George III, that, on certain conditions, England would be ready to acknowledge him as King of France.

Napoleon knew the conditions without requiring to be told them. He could mount the throne of France, with the approval of England, provided that he was ready to betray the Revolution, by giving up the " natural frontiers " of the Alps and the Rhine—the " stepping-stones "—and drawing back within the old frontiers of the old Kings. Let him restore Italy to Austria, Piedmont to the King of Sardinia, the litter of little states on the Rhine to the litter of little Rhineland princes, above all let him remove his soldiers from Holland and he might, if he chose, wear the crown of the Louis'—until, at any rate, the Kings were sufficiently rested.

The Man was not a wolf to be caught with bait of that kind. He had already refused from the French people the

title of Prince, he was not going to accept that title from the King of England at the price of his own soul. But the fact that the bait had been dangled before him aroused his sharpest suspicions. The Kings, it was obvious, viewed this Peace of Amiens very differently from the manner in which he viewed it. The Kings were still busy with their eternal plottings against the Revolution. Had Napoleon known what King George III of England had said about the Peace of Amiens on the day it was signed his suspicions would have been yet sharper than they were.

"Do you know," the English King declared, "what I call this peace? An experimental peace, for it is nothing else. But it was unavoidable."

King George might have added that what made the peace unavoidable were the feelings of his own subjects—the English people starved and war-sick.

Happily, now, the starvation was over, thanks to the death of Mad Paul and thanks to the peace itself. King George and Pitt and the War Profiteers could look forward to new efforts, *always provided* that the English people could be changed from their peace-loving, Napoleon-admiring attitude.

That, it was seen, would be no easy task, for the good citizens of London town were wild with enthusiasm for peace. Nevertheless, there were means available to direct their thoughts into channels less disturbing to those who hoped to see the Revolution speedily extinguished and the reign of the Kings once again established in France. The chief of these means was the Press. On the very day of peace Cobbett—a bitter enemy of the Revolution—wrote in his newspaper:

"We request our readers to observe that, henceforth, we shall be very particular in what we say about the most illustrious Sovereign, Consul Bonaparte. Oh! how we shall extol him! We shall endeavour to give our readers the earliest information when he rises, breakfasts, dines, sups, and spits. With all reverence we shall treat of his lovely, chaste, and bonny Queen."

This reference to the idea that Josephine had been Barras's mistress was not kind. A few days later Cobbett protested against the fact that the people of London had actually dared to draw the carriage of the French Ambassador through the Mall :

" A place appropriated exclusively as a carriage road to the use of the ROYAL FAMILY ! ! ! "

This earliest outburst was followed in a few months by such a campaign of abuse and calumny as has never been excelled on this earth and has only once been equalled—when the Germans in the Great War taught themselves the famous " Hymn of Hate " against England. I have some of the cartoons which were printed in England, in the peace years, before me, as I write. But the worst of them were too indecent to be preserved.

In one Napoleon is leading Britannia in a halter to the guillotine. Britannia's hands are bound, her trident is broken and her shield has been smashed—this was published on November 9, 1801, a month after peace had been ratified. Before another year had passed the pack of hate was in full cry after the Man with whom England was at peace—and not the English pack of hate only ; the pack of the " Glittering Beings " resident in England also, which had newspapers of its own.

It was said, among other things, that Napoleon's mother had been the mistress of Count Marbeuf in Corsica, and this abominable slander was later, when the Man had been defeated, put into rhyme thus :

" Some say his father was a farmer,
His mother too a Cyprian charmer,
That his dad Carlo was quite poor,
Letitia a French General's —— ;
If faithless to her marriage vows
She made a cuckold of her spouse,
Then Nap (some characters are rotten)
Had been a *merrily begotten*."

Even while peace continued there were pictures of Napoleon jumping from Calais to Dover and being spitted, in his jump, on the sword of John Bull.

Napoleon read most of these papers and knew exactly what they meant. He protested against the unjust and grossly indecent attacks which he saw only too clearly were meant to poison English minds and bring peace to an end, but all the satisfaction he got was a statement that the Press was free in England and that the Government could do nothing. He might, if he chose, bring an action for libel in the courts. A little later, one of the most violent writers against the peace, a French exile, was actually brought to trial in London, as a result of immense pressure from France. An English jury found this man guilty *of having tried to urge the French people to assassinate General Bonaparte.*

And, not content with poisoning the mind of England against France, the War Makers were directing that mind in friendship towards France's enemies. They continued to show the highest regard to the " Glittering Beings " resident in England—those men who had so lately flung the infernal machine at Napoleon and Josephine. The Count of Artois, the youngest brother of poor King Louis XVI, and the man who, with Marie Antoinette, had done so much to bring Versailles to ruin, the man whom George III and Pitt had hoped, two years before, to see marching to Lyons with the Russian Army and raising there the white flag of the old Kings—this man was actually King George's guest in the Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh, " lodged royally " and having compliments paid him by the troops.

It is said that his stay in Edinburgh " was the pride of the Scottish nobility," in spite of the fact that the Count of Artois " lodged his mistress in a little house " a few yards from the palace. Here is a description of the behaviour of this chief of the " Glittering Beings " at a moment when George III was professing that he loved peace and wanted to be the friend of France and of the Revolution. It is taken from a source hostile to Napoleon.

" Thus, on the occasion of the Queen's ball, the commander of the guard [at Holyrood] went to meet the

Prince [the Count of Artois], and when he entered the room, every one was made to stand aside to let him pass. . . . The Prince became very gay, went here and there, danced and complimented every one. This gaiety scandalized some stiff Englishmen, and one of them called out : ' What do you make of the Count ? One might think he was at home and we were *émigrés*.'

" On this occasion the Prince was dressed in a blue coat without decorations, but, the year before at the same ball, he was covered with ribbons and crosses of every conceivable order."

The reason why the Count of Artois, that dissolute ornament of vanished Versailles, wore no decorations was that Napoleon had told the English Government (he told also all the European Governments) that he regarded these decorations of the " Glittering Beings " as so many insults to the Revolution if worn publicly on State occasions.

At this time, too, Georges Cadoudal, the man of the infernal machine, was receiving a pension from the English Government.

Here then, in England, where the common folk were so anxious to be friendly, was a King housing Napoleon's deadliest enemy, the deadliest enemy of the Revolution, in his own palace, and according him Royal honours at State festivals, while half the newspapers in England cursed and defiled the name of the real Ruler of France, and some of the French newspapers which were printed in London actually—in the opinion of an English jury—advised Frenchmen to assassinate that Ruler.

The Man began to understand that King George III must have secret reasons for the boldness towards, and contempt of, Revolutionary France which he was showing. He sent agents to watch what was going on in Edinburgh and also—more important by far—to watch what young Alexander, the all-loving Emperor of Russia, was doing.

At the same time he began to take further measures to defend the Revolution. He had already sent away most of his ships of war to the West Indies to the one large island which remained to France, San Domingo, where the

natives had rebelled under their strangely brilliant leader, "the black Napoleon." He had also begun to fit out ships to go to Louisiana, the huge American state which had come to him—in an exchange—from the Spaniards; and he hoped soon to buy Florida.

These expeditions had been undertaken because France had such great need of "ships, colonies, and commerce," to restore her weakened industries and markets, and to provide for the wants of her people. But now Napoleon began to feel that it was dangerous to have so many vessels of his navy absent from his shores. He knew too that the new trading prosperity of France was intensely unpopular among the shipowners and war-profiteers in London and that the fact that he would not allow British goods to come into France duty free—in some cases he would not allow British goods to enter France at all—was a source of great annoyance to English merchants. Yet, surely, these men must realize that some kind of "Safeguarding of Industries" was necessary, seeing that French industries were so weak and English industries so strong? The Ruler of France could not allow his fellow-countrymen to be ruined to make fortunes for Englishmen.

His ships being far away Napoleon could do nothing, by way of additional protection at sea. He turned his attention to the land, and also to affairs at home where plots against the Revolution and his own life were still being hatched. He began to reform the Government so as to concentrate power more and more in his own hands—an essential preliminary to swift and decisive action on the frontiers, should this become necessary. There were the usual outcries by his enemies at this "tyranny"; but the Man, who was resolved to have peace at any price other than the honour of the Revolution and the greatness of France, heeded them not. And the French people, the common folk, who, perhaps, in some vague way, understood the real danger, rose up to support their hero.

France was asked by the Parliament to vote whether or not Napoleon Bonaparte should be made First Consul for Life. The answer was tremendous in its enthusiasm

and unanimity. Out of a total electorate of 3,577,259 persons, 3,568,885 voted for the new honour to Napoleon. The Man being told of this overwhelming vote of love and confidence said :

" The life of a citizen belongs to his country. The French nation wishes that mine should be wholly consecrated to it. I obey its will."

From this day he began to sign his name " Napoleon " instead of " Bonaparte." A few days later, he laid the foundations of the modern educational system of France, saying that the only good materials of a new society presenting " neither the injustices of feudalism nor the confusion of anarchy " are the youth of the country. Then he turned his attention once more to the " stepping-stone " countries on the frontiers, of which the Ring of the Kings had meant to make use for the destruction of the Revolution, and on which, in case of a new war, the whole safety of France and of the Revolution must depend.

Italy was his first concern. The new Italian Republic, which his victories had snatched from Francis of Austria, asked him to become its first President. He accepted the invitation. Then he carried out his declaration to Austria that he would make of Piedmont a part of France, just as Corsica was a part of France. The same step was taken in the case of the Island of Elba.

Then the Rhinelands engaged Napoleon's attention. The left bank of the Rhine had become French, which meant that all the princelings of the Holy Roman Empire, of which Francis of Austria was Emperor, who had lands on the left bank of the Rhine, lost their lands.

These princelings, of whom Francis was the protector and, in some cases, the kinsman, cried aloud that they were ruined, and implored Francis to help them—or rather to allow them to " help themselves," for the Holy Roman Empire included some fat bishoprics. It was an awkward position for Francis, the first prince of Christendom ; but, after all, blood is thicker than water, even than holy water. The Imperial Walrus wept a few tears over the Ecclesiastical Oysters, and then the feast began.

Napoleon was determined that Francis and his friends should not have all the fat bishopries. Francis had been the inveterate enemy of the Revolution, whereas Frederick William, the King of Prussia, and the Ruler of Bavaria had both, lately, shown a disposition to flirt with it. As members of the Holy Roman Empire they were entitled to reasonable shares of all that was going. The Man announced his intentions and nobody dared to refuse him. And so, in that crazy, ramshackle Holy Roman Empire, Frederick William became a greater and Francis a less great personality.

Francis fumed with impotent rage, and so also did King George III, for everything which made Frederick William stronger increased the danger—it was a real danger—that he might be tempted to make a mouthful of Hanover, King George's German kingdom. Nevertheless, good King George accepted a fat bishopric for himself, while at the same time protesting against the " secularizations "—as the seizing of the bishoprics was politely called. Also he redoubled his attentions to young Alexander of Russia. Napoleon, however, was before his enemies in that last direction. He actually invited Alexander to agree to the " share-out " of the bishoprics—for the Emperors of Russia, strangely enough, had a remote connection with the Holy Roman Empire. Alexander, after hinting that his own relations among the various royal beggars might perhaps get a few extra crumbs, declared that the " share-out " had his approval.

Meanwhile the French troops had, in accordance with the treaty made between Napoleon and Austria, been removed from Switzerland. The result of this removal was a violent strife in that country between the " Old Families," who tried at once to leap back to their former power, and the Swiss friends of the Revolution who bitterly opposed the " Old Families." Fighting, which was said to have been encouraged by English money, broke out, and Switzerland became a battlefield. Napoleon saw all the danger of this to France—the danger was no less than the handing over of the Alps as a " stepping-stone " to the deadliest

foes of the Revolution. He sent Ney, his great, red-haired General, the cooper's son, with an army to restore order.

"I will not," he declared, "deliver up to 15,000 mercenaries, paid by England, those formidable bastions of the Alps, which the European Coalition has not been able, in two campaigns, to wrest from our exhausted soldiers. People talk to me about the will of the Swiss people. I cannot discover it in the will of 200 aristocratic families. . . . But, at any rate, there is something that I estimate more highly than the will of the Swiss people, that is the safety of the 40,000,000 of men over whom I rule."

Instantly the "Old Families" of Switzerland, the friends of the Kings, began, in vulgar phrase, to "squeal." Napoleon, they cried, was a tyrant who was trying to steal their liberty. They did not add that the whole common folk of Switzerland were thanking God that some kind of peace had been secured and the oppression of the "Old Families" restrained. Here, at last, was something for the Kings to go on—something by means of which the enthusiasm for peace with Napoleon of the English common folk could be damped and perhaps extinguished altogether.

Tremendous efforts were made; the London newspapers shouted themselves hoarse about the "invasion of Switzerland," subscriptions were opened for the "brave people of Switzerland who are defending their liberty." In addition, the Government of King George III wrote to Napoleon protesting strongly, and then sent off a Mr. Moore to Switzerland with instructions to offer help in money to the "Old Families." Mr. Moore was told, further, to buy guns in Germany and supply them to the "Old Families" for distribution to their troops, and a message was sent off to Francis of Austria promising him £9,000,000 of the British taxpayers' money if he would act at once on behalf of the "Old Families"—and so perhaps regain the vitally important "stepping-stone" of the Alps. Alexander of Russia also was "approached." But Frederick William of Prussia was left severely alone. King

George III could have nothing to do with a man who wished to lay hands on his father's house, Hanover.

And all this while England was supposed to be at peace with France! Napoleon replied to King George III in sharp tones, saying that he would not suffer Switzerland to be "turned into another Jersey." He added (these are his instructions to his Ambassador):

"Would England kindle a continental war? But where would she find allies? . . . At any rate, if war should be renewed on the continent, it would be England that would have obliged us to conquer Europe. The First Consul is but thirty-three years old; as yet he has destroyed none but States of the second order. Who knows what time it would take him, if he were forced to it, to change anew the face of Europe and to resuscitate the Empire of the West?"

Napoleon called the leaders of Switzerland to Paris, told them that he had no wish to possess their country, and outlined proposals which they all accepted for its good government.

"You must be a neutral people," he said, "whose neutrality all the world respects, because it obliges all the world to respect it. . . . But in desiring to remain independent forget not that you must be friends of France. Her friendship is necessary for you. You have enjoyed it for ages and you are indebted to it for your independence. Switzerland must not, on any account, become a focus of intriguers and of underhand hostilities . . . what the islands of Jersey and Guernsey are to Bretagne and La Vendée."

Swiss independence was guaranteed on this understanding, and the French troops removed. The peace of Switzerland was disturbed no more; her prosperity began. This excellent and most wise settlement robbed the War Makers in England of all their arguments; but it did not rob them of their fury against the Revolution. Never had their hatred of the Man, who had defeated all their

schemes to win "stepping-stones" against him (while remaining at peace with him), burned so fiercely. The attacks in the newspapers were redoubled, so that public opinion in England began to shake. The common folk came—very reluctantly—to think that, after all, "Bonaparte" must be a dangerous enemy of the country.

## CHAPTER XLVII

### BLACK CREPE

The Peacebreakers had at last made a real impression on public opinion—for Englishmen have a natural affection for the Swiss. Without delay King George played his big card and ordered that—peace or no peace—Malta should not be given up to its Knights.

This step completed the disillusionment of Napoleon —for England had made a solemn promise to give up Malta. Her refusal to do so could only mean that a new Ring of the Kings was being, or had actually been, secretly formed against the Revolution.

It was the month of November 1802. The Man determined to use all the means at his disposal to avert the terrible danger which threatened him and the peace of the world. His personal friend, General Andréossy— a nobleman—was sent to London, and, as a consequence, Lord Whitworth came to Paris to confer, on behalf of England, with the French Government. Very soon after his arrival in London, General Andréossy was presented to King George III, who told him that he had always wished for peace and would remain of the same mind "as long as no attack is made on the dignity of my crown and the interests of my people." The common folk, still pitifully eager for peace, cheered the General wherever he went. General Andréossy wrote to Napoleon to say that he had been well received everywhere, but he added :

"The King is the most autocratically inclined of all European monarchs."

Meanwhile the War Mongers, among whom King

George III was certainly included, were busy. Parliament met and the King's Speech declared :

" In my intercourse with foreign powers I have been actuated by a sincere disposition for the maintenance of peace ; it is nevertheless impossible for me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy by which the interests of the States are connected with our own, and I cannot therefore be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and strength. [This was a reference to the big share of the Rhineland bishoprics which Frederick William of Prussia had obtained and to the consequent weakening of Francis of Austria]. . . .

" You will, I am persuaded, agree with me in thinking that it is incumbent upon us to adopt these measures of security which are best calculated to afford the prospect of preserving to my subjects the blessings of peace."

The measures for preserving " the blessings of peace " were to add 66,600 men to the Army (it had been 250,000 strong during the war but had been reduced at the peace to 125,000) and to raise the strength of the Navy from 30,000 men to 50,000 men.

" What ! " exclaimed Lord Grenville—the man who in 1800 had asked Napoleon by what right he ruled in France —" What ! Has the Government at last discovered that we have interests on the continent ; that attention to these interests is an important part of British policy ; and that they have never ceased to be sacrificed since the hollow peace signed with France ? And is it the invasion of Switzerland that led ministers to perceive this ? Was it not till then they began to discover that we were excluded from the continent ; that our allies there were immolated to the insatiable ambition of that pretended French Republic which has desisted from threatening European society with a demagogue convulsion only to threaten it with a frightful military tyranny ?

" Scarcely had you signed the preliminaries of London," the noble and furious lord continued, " before our external enemy openly seized the Italian Republic upon pretext of having the presidency of it decreed to him, appropriated Tuscany to himself, upon pretext of granting it to an

Infant of Spain and, as the price of this false concession, made himself master of the finest part of the American continent—of Louisiana. Scarcely had you signed the definitive treaty [of Amiens]—the wax which you had stamped with the arms of England upon that treaty was scarcely cold—when our indefatigable foe, disclosing the intentions which he had dexterously concealed from you, united Piedmont to France and dethroned the worthy King of Sardinia, the constant ally of England. . . . But this is not all. The definitive treaty [of Amiens] was concluded in March; in June, Piedmont was united to France; and, in August, the Consular Government intimated to Europe, plumply and plainly, that the Germanic constitution [the Holy Roman Empire] had ceased to exist. All the German States were blended together and divided, as it were, into lots which France assigned to whomsoever she pleased; and the only power on which we have reason to reckon for curbing the ambition of our enemy, Austria, has been so weakened, abased, humbled, that we know not whether she will ever be able to raise herself again. And that Stadtholder [of Holland] for whom we promised to obtain an indemnity equal to his losses, has been treated in a manner scornful to him, scornful to you, who have set yourselves up for protectors of the House of Orange. That House receives, for the Stadtholdership, a paltry bishopric, nearly the same as the House of Hanover which has been unworthily robbed of its personal property.

"Often," exclaimed Lord Grenville, "has it been alleged that England has suffered on account of Hanover; that cannot be said now, for it is on account of England that Hanover has suffered. It is because he is King of England that the Elector of Hanover has been thus despoiled of his ancient patrimony. . . ."

Lord Grenville, who had been Foreign Minister under Pitt, then abused the Government of the day—the weak Government of Mr. Addington the doctor's son—for having dismantled the fleet, disbanded the army, evacuated Egypt, given up the Cape. But he commended them on one tremendous point. They had not yet withdrawn the English troops from Malta.

" Is it from negligence, from levity that you have acted thus ? " he cried. " Lucky negligence ! The only thing we can approve in you ! But we hope you will not let this last pledge, left by accident in your hands, slip from your grasp, and that you will hold it fast to indemnify us for all the violations of treaties committed by our insatiable enemy."

This speech, which expressed evidently the views of King George III, was answered by the leader of the common folk of England, Fox, one of the greatest and truest men this country ever possessed. Fox had taken the trouble to go to Paris during the peace and see things for himself. He had been received again and again by Napoleon with the utmost friendliness and shown everything which was likely to interest him. Fox said :

" I am astonished at all I hear, astonished, particularly, on considering who they are that say such things. Indeed, I am more grieved than any of the . . . friends of Mr. Pitt at the growing greatness of France who is daily extending her power in Europe and in America. I am grieved at it, though I share not the prepossessions of the hon. members against the French Republic. But, after all, when was this extraordinary aggrandisement which astonishes and alarms you, when was it produced ? Was it during the administration of Mr. Addington . . . or during the administration of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville ? Under the administration of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville had not France acquired the line of the Rhine, gained possession of Holland, Switzerland, Italy as far as Naples ? Was this because no resistance had been made to her, because her encroachments had been tamely endured, that she had thus outstretched her giant arms ? I apprehend not, for Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville had banded together the most formidable of coalitions to crush that ambitious France.

" They laid siege to Valenciennes and Dunkirk, and already destined the first of these places for Austria, the second for Great Britain. That France, who is charged with intruding by force in the affairs of others, was then to be invaded for the purpose of forcing upon her a Government to which she would not submit, of obliging her to

accept the family of the Bourbons, whose yoke she spurned, and by one of those sublime movements, of which history ought to preserve an eternal record and to recommend to imitation, France repelled her invaders. Valenciennes and Dunkirk were not wrested from her; laws were not dictated to her; on the contrary, she has dictated laws to others.

"Now we, though warmly attached to the cause of Great Britain, have felt an involuntary movement of sympathy, with that generous outburst of liberty and patriotism, and we have no desire to conceal it. . . . Has not old England applauded every noble inspiration in all nations? And you who now deplore the greatness of France, was it not yourselves who provoked her victorious efforts? Was it not you who, by striving to take Valenciennes and Dunkirk, urged her to take Belgium? Who, by striving to impose laws upon her, urged her to give laws to half the continent?

"You talk of Italy; but was it not in the power of the French when you were treating for peace? Did you not know that it was? Was not this one of your grievances? Did this circumstance prevent you from signing the peace? And you, colleagues of Mr. Pitt, who then felt how necessary this peace was rendered by the sufferings of a ten-years' war, how indispensable it was for assuaging the evils which were your work, you consented that the present ministers should sign it for you. Why did you not oppose it then? . . .

"The King of Piedmont [King of Sardinia] interests you much—well and good; but Austria whose ally he was much more than yours, Austria has abandoned him. She did not even choose to mention him in the negotiations, lest the indemnity that might be given to this prince should diminish the part of the Venetian States, which she coveted for herself. England, then, would pretend to uphold the independence of Italy more effectively than Austria!

"You talk of Germany turned upside down; but what has been done in Germany? The ecclesiastical states [the bishoprics] have been 'secularized' to indemnify the hereditary princes by virtue of a formal article of the treaty of Luneville [between Austria and France], a treaty signed nine months before the preliminaries of London,

more than twelve months before the treaty of Amiens, and signed at what period? When Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville were ministers of England. . . .

"This, according to you, was turning Germany upside down. *Then why do you not complain of Russia, who went halves with France in consummating the convulsion?*

"The Elector of Hanover, you say, because, unfortunately for himself, he was King of England, has been very ill-used. I have not heard that he was extremely dissatisfied with his lot; for, without losing anything, he has obtained a rich bishopric. Besides, I strongly suspect those, who so warmly interest themselves for the Elector of Hanover, who manifest such solicitude for him, of aiming to gain, through this medium, the confidence of the King of England and so striving to advance themselves in his councils.

"No doubt France is great, much greater than a good Englishman ought to wish; but with that greatness, of which the late ministers of England are the authors, we were acquainted before the preliminaries [of peace] of London, before the negotiations of Amiens; and that ought not to be a motive for violating solemn treaties.

"*Look vigilantly to the execution of those treaties; if they are violated, claim the fulfilment of the plighted oath; it is your right and your duty. But because France now appears too great to us, greater than we thought her at first—to break a solemn engagement, to retain Malta, for instance, would be an unworthy breach of faith which would compromise the honour of Britain.* . . .

"Must we then, to gratify the ambition of our merchants, spill torrents of British blood?"

That speech announced clearly that Fox knew that secret dealings were going on between King George III and the young Alexander of Russia: "*Why did you not complain of Russia?* . . ." It announced, also, that Fox understood the real reason of the resolve to keep Malta. It was not the trade with India which was in question—it was the use of Malta as a naval and military base to bring help, in Italy, to Francis of Austria, that acquisitive ruler whose appetite for fresh lands disgusted even his own allies.

But what cared King George III and the War Profiteers, so long as a new Ring of the Kings could be built up and set to the good work of destroying the Revolution and the Man of the Revolution? King George now shifted his ground and declared that he would not go out of Malta until Napoleon fulfilled his promise to the Dutch to remove his troops from Holland at "*the final conclusion of peace with England.*"

It was answered to this that a peace, the conditions of which had not been fulfilled, was not "*finally concluded,*" and that, in any case, this promise had been made to the Dutch and not to the English. There was no mention of Holland in the Peace of Amiens, and, hence, it behoved England not to interfere in matters which did not concern her. France had fulfilled every jot and tittle of the Peace of Amiens. Let England do the same—let England come out of Malta—and Holland would be evacuated.

It is difficult to understand how even King George III had the effrontery to ask Napoleon to destroy himself by leaving Holland at this moment. For Holland was the only safeguard which the Man of the Revolution possessed against England herself. Had there been no French troops in Holland, English troops would, at once, have used that country as a "stepping-stone" by which to spring at the North of France, and troops from King George's beloved Hanover would have rushed over the frontier into Holland to co-operate with them. Belgium and Holland have always been the "weakest spot" in the armour of France. To demand in this fashion the removal of French troops from Holland was to announce the formation of a new Ring of the Kings—a Ring determined to use Malta as one of its chief bases.

And so Napoleon instantly perceived. He told General Andréossy to discuss freely the question of Hanover, to be frank about the internal affairs of France—and to find out all he could about those of England—and to demand the departure from London of the more violent of the French enemies of the Revolution and

notably of Georges Cadoudal, the man of the infernal machine.

" In our existing relations with England," he wrote, " we cannot but see a kind of armistice, and this position will appear to us unsatisfactory and distasteful so long as we see intrigues against the internal government of France being formed in London ; two hundred individuals who, by the terms of the treaty of Amiens, should be banished from British territory, living in Jersey. . . ."

Neither Malta nor Egypt, however, had been evacuated by King George III. Napoleon passed from anxiety to indignation. At this moment a report, written by a Colonel Sebastiani, on the state of Egypt came into his hands. Colonel Sebastiani had been sent to Egypt and to Turkey on various semi-private missions. He reported that the English were settled in Alexandria and did not seem disposed to leave that city, that the Turks were fighting the Mamelukes for possession of the country, and that, in the present state of affairs, 6,000 French soldiers would be able to reconquer the country.

Napoleon promptly published this report in his official newspaper the *Moniteur*, declaring that he did so in order to point out clearly to the whole world the conduct of England in respect to the treaty of Amiens. He knew well, as his letters to his agent in London show, that his bold action would upset the British Government, but his position was too dangerous for such considerations to weigh with him. It was necessary, without delay of any kind, to " draw the badger."

" The badger," in the shape of the British War Lords, declared that the report was an insult and showed what kind of a man Napoleon was, and it was in vain that Fox pointed out that, if Napoleon had really meant to attack Egypt—as was said—he would scarcely have begun by publishing his intention in the newspapers.

Napoleon knew where he was. It might be true enough, as Lord Whitworth had told him, that orders to evacuate Egypt had been sent out. It was certain that

no such orders of evacuation had gone to Malta. The Man demanded an explanation. He was told, as he expected to be told, that the publication of Colonel Sebastiani's report had so gravely annoyed the English public that Malta must be retained.

In other words, King George III was snatching at the very excuse for his treaty-breaking with which Napoleon had deliberately supplied him. It was the middle of February 1803. The Russian Ambassador called on the Man and said that his master, the young Alexander, was distressed to see how badly things were going between France and England, both of whom were very dear to him, and would like to offer his help to smooth over the difficulties. Napoleon, who had good reason to distrust Alexander in everything, declared formally that he was in favour of peace, and then sent for Lord Whitworth. His mind was made up to try whether or not open diplomacy would save the situation.

He offered the British Ambassador a chair and sat down, on the far side of the table, opposite to him. He went over, point by point, all the circumstances and events which had raised his suspicions and his anxieties about the good faith of King George III and his friends.

" Every wind that blows from England," Napoleon cried, " brings me nothing but hatred and insult. Now we have come to a situation from which we must, absolutely, extricate ourselves. Will you, or will you not, fulfil the treaty of Amiens ? I have executed it on my part with scrupulous fidelity. That treaty obliged me to evacuate Naples, Tarento, and the Roman States within three months; in less than two months all the French troops were out of those countries. Ten months have elapsed since the exchange of the ratifications, and the English troops are still in Malta and at Alexandria.

" It is useless to try to deceive us on this point ; will you have peace, will you have war ? If you are for war, only say so ; we will wage it unrelentingly and till the ruin of one of the two nations.

" If you are for peace you must evacuate Alexandria

and Malta, for that rock of Malta, on which so many fortifications have been built, is no doubt of great importance from a maritime point of view; but it has a much greater importance in my estimation, inasmuch as it interests the highest point of honour of France. What would the world say if we were to allow a solemn treaty signed with us to be violated? It would doubt our energy. For my part, my resolution is fixed; I had rather see you in possession of the heights of Montmartre than of Malta."

Lord Whitworth in reply repeated the statement that the Press was free in England and could not be controlled, and said over again what had been said already, namely, that Malta would have been evacuated but for Colonel Sabastiani's report on Egypt and for the changes which had taken place in Europe.

"To what changes are you alluding?" Napoleon demanded sharply. "Not the Presidency of the Italian Republic conferred on me before the signature of the treaty of Amiens? . . . Is it Piedmont? Is it Switzerland? So little have those two circumstances added to the reality of things that, indeed, they are not worth mentioning. But, be that as it may, you have no right now to complain; for, as for Piedmont, I told everybody, even before the treaty of Amiens, what I meant to do with it. I told Austria, Russia, and yourselves."

Napoleon then discussed Switzerland and the Rhine, and added:

"You well know, that, in all I have done, it has been my object to complete the execution of the treaties and to ensure the general peace. Now look, seek about; is there anywhere a State that I am threatening or that I desire to invade? None, as you well know—at least while the peace shall be maintained.

"What you say about the report of Colonel Sebastiani is not worthy of the relations of two great nations. If you are jealous of my designs on Egypt, my lord, I will endeavour to satisfy you. Yes, I have thought a great deal about Egypt, and I shall think about it still more if you force me to renew the war. But I will not endanger

the peace, which we have enjoyed so short a time, for the sake of reconquering that country. The Turkish Empire threatens to fall. For my part, I shall contribute to uphold it as long as possible ; but if it crumbles to pieces, I mean France to have her share.

" Nevertheless be assured that I shall not precipitate events. If I had pleased, out of the numerous divisions which I despatched to St. Domingo, I might have sent one to Alexandria. The 4,000 men you have there would not have been any obstacle to me. They would have been, on the contrary, my excuse. I could have pounced, unawares, on Egypt, and this time you should not have wrested it from me. But I have no thoughts of the kind."

Napoleon paused a moment and then said :

" Do you suppose that I deceive myself about the power which I have at this moment over public opinion in France and in Europe ? That power is not great enough to allow me to venture with impunity on an aggression without adequate reason. The opinion of Europe would instantly turn against me ; my political ascendancy would be lost. As for France, it is necessary for me to prove to her that war is made upon me, that I have not provoked it, in order to inspire her with that enthusiastic ardour which I mean to excite against you if you oblige me to fight. *All the faults must be yours and not one of them mine.* I contemplate, therefore, no aggression. All that I had to do in Germany and in Italy is done ; and I have done nothing but what I had previously announced, avowed, or comprehended in a treaty."

This was a plain statement of the facts. But the frankness of the Man went further.

" Now," he declared, " if you doubt my desire to preserve peace, listen and judge whether I am sincere. Though yet very young [he was thirty-three] I have attained a power, a renown to which it would be difficult to add. Do you imagine that I want to risk this power and renown in a desperate struggle ? If I have a war with Austria, I shall contrive to find the way to Vienna. If I have a war with you, I shall take from you every ally

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on the continent; I will cut you off from all access to it, from the Baltic to the Gulf of Torento. You will blockade us, but I will blockade you in my turn; you will make the continent a prison for us, but I will make the extent of the seas a prison for you."

Napoleon drew himself up.

"And there must be more direct means. There must be an assembled 150,000 men and an immense flotilla; we must try to cross the Strait and perhaps bury in the depth of the sea my fortune, my glory, and my life. It is an awful risk, my lord, an invasion of England!"

Then, to the amazement of Lord Whitworth, the Man explained in detail how an invasion of England might be tried and why it was likely to fail. He added:

"This risk, my lord, awful as it is, I am determined to take if you force me to it. I will risk my army and myself. With me that great enterprise will have chances which it cannot have with any other. I have crossed the Alps in winter; I know how to render possible what appears impossible, to most men; if I succeed your children's children shall deplore with tears of blood the resolution that you shall have obliged me to take.

"Ask yourself, if, powerful, prosperous, and peaceable as I am at this moment, I am likely to want to risk power, prosperity, and peace in such an enterprise, and also whether, when I say that I desire peace, I am not sincere."

Napoleon's voice lost its commanding ring. He spoke quietly:

"It is better for you, for me, to keep within the limits of treaties. You must get out of Malta; you must not shelter my assassins in England. Let me be abused, if you please, by the English Press, but not by those miserable emigrants, who dishonour the protection you grant them and whom your Aliens Act permits you to expel from the country. Act cordially with me, and I promise you, on my part, an entire cordiality! I promise you continual efforts to reconcile our interests wherever they are reconcilable.

"See what power we should exercise over the world if we could bring our two nations together. You have a navy which, with the incessant efforts of ten years and the employment of all my resources, I should not be able to equal; but I have half a million of men ready to march under my command whithersoever I choose to lead them. If you are masters of the sea, I am master of the land.

"Let us, then, think of uniting rather than of going to war, and we shall rule at pleasure the destinies of the world. *Everything is possible, in the interest of humanity and of our double power*, to France and England united."

The Man had spoken. Lord Whitworth remained silent. His silence could mean only that the War Makers in England felt sure of their ground. They meant to keep Malta—and, if possible, get France out of Holland at the same time—because they had substantial hope of being able to form a new Ring of the Kings if not at once, at least in the near future.

Napoleon promised himself that either the proof or the disproof of this suspicion would be furnished very soon, and set about testing his distrustful neighbour. Three days after his interview with Lord Whitworth he thus addressed his Parliament:

"The Government guarantees to the nation the peace of the continent and it has reason to hope for the continuance of the maritime peace. That peace is needed and desired by all nations. To preserve it the Government will do all that is compatible with the national honour, essentially involved in the strict execution of treaties.

"But in England two parties are contending for power. One of them made the peace and seems decided to maintain it; the other has sworn implacable hatred to France. There is the reason of the fickleness of their votes and their plans and of their attitude that is, at once, peaceful and threatening.

"As long as this strife of parties lasts there are measures which prudence dictates to the Government of the Republic. Five hundred thousand men must be in arms ready to defend their country and to avenge her. It is a strange necessity imposed by wretched passions on two nations,

who are both bound to peace alike by interest and by inclination.

" Be the success of the intrigue what it will in London it will not entice other nations to form new leagues, *and the Government states with just pride that England to-day cannot strive alone against France.*"

That last sentence was a challenge to the enemies of peace, for it told Europe that the Man realized that England had no intention, and no need, of " *striving alone.*" Some one, clearly, was with her. Let that unknown foe beware ! Half a million of soldiers, led by the greatest Captain of the age, would know how " *to defend their country and avenge her.*"

The challenge had an instant effect in England. A fortnight later King George III told his Parliament that :

" His Majesty thinks it necessary to acquaint the House of Commons that as very considerable military preparations are being carried on in parts of France and Holland, he has judged it expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution for the security of his dominions ; though the preparations to which His Majesty refers are avowedly directed to colonial service, yet, as discussions of great moment are now pending between His Majesty and the French Government, the result of which must at present be uncertain, His Majesty is induced to make this communication to his faithful Commons, etc."

Every word of this statement was incorrect in point of fact—as must have been known. There was not a disposable ship in any French port. There were two sail of the line and two frigates in a Dutch port, having 300 men on board bound for Louisiana. Was England going to be invaded with four ships—the England of Nelson ? Napoleon had got his answer. Malta would not be given up. The War Makers had triumphed over the Peace Makers.

The Man, on hearing the news, lost his self-control completely, so upset was he. He was about to receive the Diplomatic Corps. He strode into the room, filled

with ambassadors and ministers, and walked straight up to Lord Whitworth.

" ' So you are determined to go to war ! ' he cried.

" ' No, Premier Consul,' Lord Whitworth replied, ' we are too sensible of the advantages of peace. We have already been at war for the last fifteen years.'

" Napoleon seemed to wait for an answer. Lord Whitworth added :

" ' War has already lasted longer than it should have done.'

" ' But you want to make war for fifteen years more and you are forcing me into it.'

" ' That,' said Lord Whitworth, ' is very far from His Majesty's intentions.'

" Napoleon was violently agitated. He left Lord Whitworth abruptly and strode up to the Russian Ambassador.

" ' The English,' he declared, ' want to make war ; but if they are the first to draw the sword, I shall be the last to replace it in its sheath. They refuse to respect treaties. In the future they will have to be covered with black crepe.' "

That challenge to Alexander of Russia did not pass unnoticed, nor did the words which were spoken, a moment later, to the Swedish Minister, whose royal master was suspected of being in league with Russia.

" Your King forgets," said Napoleon, " that Sweden is not what it was in the time of Gustavus Adolphus, that it has sunk to a third-rate power."

There were three separate and violent outbursts. Napoleon was certainly not acting on this occasion. He was venting his measureless disappointment on the representatives of the three countries whom he rightly believed to be secretly leagued against him. He should not have done this ; it was a very grave breach of good manners. But there is the excuse for him that he had just heard the death-knell of all his hopes of being able to maintain the Revolution peaceably in Europe. He knew, now, that the Kings were implacable in their hate and that if the

Revolution would live, it must put forth the last tittle of its strength in endless warfare.

Here is Lord Whitworth's own description of the conclusion of this painful scene :

" In a few minutes he came back to me, to my great annoyance, and resumed the conversation, if such it can be called, by something personally civil to me. He then resumed :

" ' What is the meaning of these armaments ? Against whom are you taking all those precautions ? I have not a single man-of-war in the French ports, but if you wish to arm I shall arm too ; if you wish to fight, I shall fight too. You may succeed in annihilating France, you shall never intimidate her.'

" ' We wish to do neither,' I said ; ' we should like to live on good terms with her. . . .'

" ' You should then respect your treaties,' said he. ' May evil befall those who fail to respect their treaties ! They are responsible to all Europe.'

" He was too agitated to make it advisable to prolong the conversation ; I therefore made no answer, and he retired to his apartments repeating the last phrase."

And, after that, the Peace of Amiens dropped to hopeless shipwreck, though several further attempts were made to save it, and though Napoleon's friend in London, Count Andréossy, wrote to him that peace could yet be saved by making concessions—since the English Government wanted peace, and though Talleyrand, and even Joseph, tried to persuade Napoleon to give up Malta or at least to compromise on the matter.

Napoleon would not listen to those worldly-wise counsels, for he knew that, translated into plain language, they meant " give up the Revolution."

" No," he cried, " Malta or nothing. Malta gives the domination of the Mediterranean. . . . As we must fight, sooner or later, with a people to whom the greatness of France is intolerable, why, the sooner the better. The national energy is not blunted by a long peace." He added : " Let them obtain a place in the Mediterranean to put into :

I have no objection. But I am determined that they shall not have two Gibraltars in that sea ; one at the entrance and another in the middle."

A few days later, however, the Man offered to compromise to this extent that, if they chose, the English might put Malta into the hands of the Emperor of Russia, the young Alexander, who had said he was ready to help to smooth matters over. In those hands the island would be safe from French aggression.

A very strange reply to this proposal came from England. King George III said *he knew for certain that the Emperor of Russia would not accept the task which France wished to impose on him.*

How did King George III know this for certain ? For, in fact, Alexander did accept the task. Napoleon's suspicions of Alexander increased a hundredfold. There, evidently, was a man whom nobody could trust.

Nevertheless this Russian " Mr. Facing-both-Ways " was now in an awkward position. He could scarcely give open support to England's War Lords just after he had agreed to act as the world's peacemaker and testified anew to the world how much he loved every little corner of it. The Man, if he had failed to save the peace, had at least put a spoke in the wheels of the Kings. A breathing space was secured to him to prepare for the fearful life-and-death struggle into which the Revolution was about to be plunged.

END OF BOOK III

# BOOK IV

## THE PATRIOT

"I am the Revolution."—NAPOLEON in 1804.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### CHECK TO THE KING

Napoleon knew that King George III and Pitt, who had again become King George's Prime Minister, were trying to form a new Ring of the Kings against him. He struck at England with all the force he could command to defeat that Ringmaking before it had time to develop.

An immense army, perfectly equipped and disciplined, appeared on the cliffs of Boulogne; it was supplied with thousands of flat-bottomed boats for use on some calm, misty night when the British Navy should lack wind to its sails. There were more of these flat-bottomed boats too at Calais and Dunkirk and Ostend and in the Dutch harbours.

This gesture of defiance put King George under the necessity of arming his people to repel the threatened invasion. It also made it necessary to recall the greater part of the British Fleet to home waters. Thus, the new war brought no benefit to England. Even the benefit which had been confidently expected, the seizing of Napoleon's new American Colony, Louisiana, failed to materialize, for the Man had taken the precaution, on the eve of the outbreak of war, to sell Louisiana—for £3,000,000—to Mr. Munroe, that great citizen of the United States whose name is now immortalized in "The Munroe Doctrine" that no European country may acquire territory on the American continent. There can be little doubt that the Munroe Doctrine, like so many of the pillars of the modern world, owed some part of its origin to the Man of the French Revolution.

The loss of Louisiana was a blow to King George; but

a far heavier blow soon fell on him, namely, the loss of Hanover, "his father's house," which Napoleon seized as soon as war began. The small Hanoverian army was easily overpowered and was compelled to sign a treaty of surrender. This treaty was sent to London for King George's approval and signature. When the poor old man saw it he was transported with passion. He snatched, or so it has been said, at the fatal document and flung it in the face of the unfortunate minister who had dared to present it to him.

Hanover served Napoleon well, for not only did its loss oppress the mind of the King of England; the hope of obtaining it as a gift from Napoleon whetted the appetite of Frederick William of Prussia and made that acquisitive monarch most reluctant to join the new Ring of the Kings. And Frederick William's reluctance made Francis of Austria reluctant also, for he, too, had hopes of receiving further gifts among the Rhineland states.

The Man realized that, for the moment, he had checkmated the Kings. He turned to affairs at home, determined to use the breathing space thus afforded him, to organize the French nation for defence. The Government was put on what was, virtually, a war footing; power was concentrated in Napoleon's own hands; the army was strengthened.

These measures were not popular among certain classes —notably the Royalists. Nor did Napoleon's own brothers and sisters welcome them with any enthusiasm. These brothers were frankly jealous. Joseph could not forget that he was the elder. Lucien, as stern a Republican as ever, was dissatisfied with the "reward" he had received for his great services in the orangery at St. Cloud. Louis, a gentler soul, and Jerome, the spoiled boy, chafed at the military and naval discipline to which, respectively, they were subject. Meanwhile Eliza, the bluestocking of the family, was fishing for good jobs for her soldier husband, and Caroline, now the wife of the swashbuckling Murat, was dividing her time between demanding "rights" and detesting and abusing Josephine,

whom she hated with all the violence of her determined nature—the more so that her brother Louis had been more or less hurried, by Napoleon and Josephine, into a marriage with Hortense Beauharnais, Josephine's pretty daughter by her first husband.

Only Pauline, that very lovely and very gay girl, really understood and really loved her great brother. Pauline's gaiety, though, was rather overpowering, and so Napoleon had ordered her to accompany her husband, a soldier, on the expedition which he had despatched to St. Domingo in the West Indies. On that expedition Pauline became a widow.

The good mother of this remarkable family held aloof from politics. But she seems to have thought that Lucien had a genuine grievance against Napoleon, and, for a time, was more often in the company of her third than of her second son. Besides, she detested Josephine.

As for that happy-natured, easy-going woman, she had begun to make a real friend of the man whom she had never been able to tolerate as a lover.

## CHAPTER XLIX

### RED BLOOD AND BLUE

On the morning of January 9, 1804, Napoleon awoke as usual at 2 a.m. and went into his study where one of his secretaries awaited him. He sat down on the taffeta-covered sofa and called for the various reports of his ministers. He became absorbed, instantly, in the reading of those reports while only the crackling of his fire disturbed the silence of the great palace and the outer silence of Paris.

"What is this?"

The Man raised his head sharply. He had a police report in his hand, a report on the examination of five persons arrested on suspicion of being spies. Two of the five had been acquitted; two had been condemned and shot; one, named Querelle, had offered, on condition that his life was spared, to give information about a plot to assassinate Napoleon.

The secretary did not know the exact nature of the revelations made by Querelle, but they were soon obtained. Querelle said that, six months before, within three weeks of the breaking of the peace between England and France, Georges Cadoudal, the organizer of the infernal machine, the pensioner of King George III, had landed in France, from England—

"On the cliff of Bivelle, which he had ascended like the smugglers by means of a rope secured to a projection in the cleft of the rocks, whence, from one hiding-place to another he had at last managed to get to Paris."

So Georges Cadoudal, the most desperate and determined of assassins, was now in Paris. Napoleon began

pacing the room. Was this arrival connected in any way with the rumour which Drake, the English Minister in Bavaria, had been putting about, of the approaching death of the head of the French Government and the restoration to the throne of France of "King Louis XVIII"?

Napoleon summoned his Chief of Police, Réal, and his ex-Chief of Police, Fouché, and took counsel with Colonel Savary, of the gendarmes of his guard. Inquiries were set on foot, and within a few weeks discoveries were made which caused even the Man himself to take precautions. Ségur relates that, being on duty at the palace of the Tuileries one night, he was awakened at one o'clock in the morning by his General who said:

"Get up. The parole and the countersign must be changed immediately and the duties must be carried out as if in presence of the enemy. You understand me: there is not an instant to lose."

There was not an instant to lose. For another suspected person, who had just been arrested, had disclosed the fact that General Pichegru, Napoleon's old master of mathematics at Brienne, who had sold himself to the Kings and fled to England, had also landed secretly in France, and that General Moreau, the victor of Hohenlinden, was in communication with Pichegru and Georges Cadoudal.

Napoleon had just heard this news.

"Moreau!" he cried. "What, Moreau, in such a plot! He thus to destroy himself, the only one who has any chance against me! I have indeed a lucky star!"

It was proposed that Moreau should be arrested at once.

"No," said the Man. "He is a person of too much importance, I have too great an interest in his culpability; public opinion would fasten upon this; I must have other proofs, above all that of Pichegru's presence here."

That was a just estimate, for Moreau, who was popular, had opposed Napoleon at every turn and was suspected of being strongly in favour of the return of "King

Louis XVIII." Proof of Moreau's connection with the plot was soon forthcoming. Moreau was arrested and taken to the Temple, that prison in which King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had passed their last days together. Napoleon at once sent a messenger to him proposing that he should make a statement to him, Napoleon, of a private character which would put an end to the whole matter. Moreau received this messenger haughtily, denied that he was connected with any plot, and refused to see Napoleon.

The news of this refusal filled Napoleon with distress. For he knew now that the plot was of a very serious character, and that the Kings, his mortal enemies, were certainly behind it. Both Georges Cadoudal and Pichegru had been brought over from England in a British ship of war under the command of Captain Wright, an officer of the British Navy. The Count of Artois, "King Louis XVIII's" younger brother, had promised to come himself to Paris when the preparations were complete, and the Duke of Enghien, a prince of the blood-royal of France, now serving in the English Army, was already stationed on the French frontier, just beyond the Rhine, from which area, on the news of Napoleon's murder, foreign troops were to march on Paris and give support to the Bourbons.

The facts were made public and Napoleon ordered that Paris should be placed in a state of siege. Every gate of the city was guarded and a house-to-house search for Pichegru and Georges Cadoudal and their accomplices, Rivière and the brothers Polignac, was begun. On February 28, after a violent struggle, Pichegru was taken; on March 9 Georges Cadoudal shared the same fate, though he killed two men before he was finally overpowered.

Both Pichegru and Georges Cadoudal were found to be provided with passports and to be lavishly supplied with English money. They stated that they were not assassins but that they "had only been waiting for the presence of a prince of the Bourbon blood in Paris to put a counter-revolution in force."

These statements contained an element of truth. The plan had been to place a hundred horsemen in ambush at night on the road to Paris from St. Cloud along which, usually at night, Napoleon frequently drove with only a few guards clattering round his carriage. The horsemen were to kill the guards, drag the Man from his carriage and despatch him there and then. And, then, the Count of Artois was to seize on the reins of Government and summon the foreign armies from the Rhine to establish his brother, " Louis XVIII," on the throne.

When the plot became known to Napoleon the Count of Artois had already sent his son, the Duke of Berry, to France. But the Duke was warned in time and escaped back to England. A message was sent to the Duke of Enghien by his father, the Prince of Condé, advising him at once to flee away from the Rhine to a safer place. The Duke of Enghien, however, had the blood of great soldiers in his veins as well as the blood of the Bourbons. He wrote to his father in England refusing to move, and declaring :

" There, where danger is, is the post of honour for a Bourbon. At this moment when the order of the Privy Council of His Britannic Majesty has summoned the *émigrés* to the banks of the Rhine, I cannot, whatever may happen, abandon these worthy and loyal defenders of the French monarchy."

The Duke of Enghien therefore remained at the post from which, on a signal from England, in whose service he was, he had expected to march with the " worthy and loyal defenders of the French monarchy " to Paris. Napoleon heard of this :

" What," he cried to his Chief of Police, " you did not tell me that the Duke of Enghien was only four leagues from my frontier ! Am I a dog to be killed in the street ? Are my murderers sacred beings ? Why was I not warned that they are assembling at Ettenheim ? My very person is attacked. It is time that I should give back blow for blow. The head of the most guilty among them must atone for this."

Thunder gathered on Napoleon's brow so that even his intimate friends grew fearful. For they knew that, in all that touched the safety of the Revolution, he was as a man possessed, inexorable and without compunction. All his words betrayed the smouldering wrath which was consuming him.

"These Bourbons," he cried, "fancy that they may shed my blood like that of some vile animal; and yet my blood is quite as precious as theirs."

A few days later he declared to the Russian Ambassador, whose conduct had aroused his suspicions:

"I will suffer no affront from any prince on the face of this earth."

It was the red blood of humanity, perhaps, challenging the blue blood of Kings.

Mark Napoleon at this crisis of his life! He has recognized himself now as the Revolution incarnate; the living symbol of its power and its majesty. He is aware that, for the moment, he, and he alone, upholds it in the only form in which it can achieve permanence. If the assassin's dagger reaches his heart, the Revolution will fall with him, leaving only a confused memory of horrors and strife at home and of war on every stricken frontier, the memory of a tempest, of darkness stabbed with the red shafts of a hurricane sun. Napoleon set his terrible course.

"I will," he declared in awful tones, "pitilessly shoot the very first of these Bourbon princes who shall fall into my hands."

He was pacing his study with quick, nervous steps. He stood still and snatched up a map of the Rhine country about Strassbourg. It was not the map he wanted. He threw it down and snatched up another . . .

"Baden," he muttered . . . "The Duke of Enghien is living in Baden. . . ."

He made a pile of maps on the floor before he found what he was looking for—for his secretary, the faithful Meneval, was having a day off. Baden was a state of the Holy Roman Empire under the protection of Austria.

The Ruler of Baden was a near relation of the Emperor of Russia. And the Duke of Enghien was in the service of the King of England. If he did what he proposed to do, Austria, Russia, and England would all stand outraged and aghast!

He had sent for his Cabinet of Ministers. They entered the study and saw the piles of crumpled maps on the floor. They glanced at their Master. He was bending over one of the maps which was spread on the table.

Napoleon raised his head and told them that he meant to have the Duke of Enghien seized in his residence on the other side of the French frontier. The ministers grew profoundly uneasy. The wise and wily Cambacérès ventured to expostulate. Such an action, he said, would suggest to the world that Napoleon had gone back to the days of Danton and Robespierre.

The Man's eyes flashed.

"The Royalists," he said grimly, "stand in need of warning. It is better to make one stern and striking example than to punish ten minor tools. After that we can afford to be merciful again."

Cambacérès then pleaded that it would be most unwise to violate the land of a foreign prince by sending armed men into Baden to arrest the Duke.

"Those little German princes," said Napoleon, "also need a lesson."

When the meeting was over Napoleon spoke privately to Cambacérès:

"I know your motive for speaking," he said; "it is devotion to me. I thank you for it; but I will not allow myself to be put to death without defending myself. I will make these people tremble and teach them to keep quiet for the future."

And so the orders to seize the young Duke were given. On the night of March 15, 1804, this Prince of the Royal House of France, who believed himself safe in a foreign state, was told that armed men surrounded his dwelling. He thought of resisting, but realized that it would be

useless. He gave himself up. The horsemen of Napoleon carried him across the Rhine into France. The Duke's papers were seized. Nothing was found in them to suggest that he knew about the plot of Georges Cadoudal. Nevertheless Napoleon ordered him to be brought to Paris and instantly tried by court-martial for the crime of having fought in a foreign army against the French Revolution. The penalty attached to that crime was death.

Napoleon, after he had given this order, set out from Paris to Malmaison where Josephine was living. He said that his brothers and his ministers might come to see him, but no one else. He walked alone about the gardens, for hours together.

Paris was still wildly excited about the great plot of Georges Cadoudal and Moreau and Pichegru and the Count of Artois. Messages, too, had begun to pour in from all parts of France demanding that Napoleon should be made King so that, if he were to be stricken down, one of his brothers might succeed him and the "Glittering Beings" be kept out of the country. Joseph and Louis were both tremendously interested in this proposal, for to be changed into Princes was exactly what they desired.

Napoleon, pacing the garden walks of Malmaison, glared at their eagerness. These brothers of his, and his sisters too, scarcely troubled any longer to hide their contempt of the Revolution. Would they, he wondered, be so eager to snatch at Royalty when they realized the nature of the Royalty he had decided to bestow on them —a Royalty of the common folk, baptized with the blue blood of the Duke of Enghien, the son of a hundred Kings? Between that Royalty and the old Royalty there could, to the very end, be no accommodation and no compromise.

The news that the young Duke was a prisoner behind the black walls and turrets of Vincennes was brought to Josephine.

"You were once, yourself, numbered among the gayest of the beauties of Versailles," those who brought the news told her. "You knew the Duke of Enghien's

father and his grandfather—the illustrious Condés. Oh, plead now with your husband for his life."

Josephine sought Napoleon in the spring-time garden and begged him with tears not to spill the royal blood. She begged him, during the terrible day of March 20, again and again.

"You are a woman," said the Man of the Revolution, "and know nothing about politics. Your duty is silence."

Joseph came too, and then Napoleon's mother. They both counselled mercy. Murat also, the swashbuckler, Caroline's handsome and dashing husband, who saw himself already a Prince of the New France, entered the fatal garden. He pointed to the facings of his uniform. He cried to his brother-in-law:

"You are about to stain them with blood."

Then he said that, as Governor of Paris, he would be compelled to sign the orders for the Duke's execution and that his soul revolted against signing them.

"Very well. I will sign them myself," said Napoleon.

The blinds were drawn at Malmaison, the candles lit. Josephine and Madame de Remusat sat discussing the terrible events even then going forward in Paris. The Man entered the room, absent, unsociable, yet affecting to be calm. He sat down at a small table and set chessmen on a board. Madame de Remusat played with him. She did not dare to lift her eyes from the board, but she has left it on record that she heard her opponent murmuring verses from the great French poets about mercy.

Meanwhile, at that moment, the young Duke of Enghien was face to face with the officers ordered to try him in the fortress of Vincennes. He was calm, almost haughty, as became a Prince of the Blood Royal of France. He denied any connection with Georges Cadoudal. He declared that he had served against France in the past and that he was living near the Rhine for the purpose of serving against her in the future. Then he demanded to be allowed to see Napoleon.

It was midnight. The candles revealed the proud face of the aristocrat, the agitated countenances of the

group of officers who listened to this avowal of implacable, yet noble, detestation of that Revolution for which, so often, they had risked their all. The president of the court martial, Savary, tried even to prevent the Prince from saying too much. The evidence was taken. The accused was conducted out of the room. The president asked for a verdict, and got the only verdict which could be given on the charge preferred.

The Prince was sentenced to death.

The order to the court-martial declared that if the verdict was "guilty," sentence must be executed without delay. A few minutes later, at 2.30 a.m., in the fosse of Vincennes, Louis Antoine Henri de Bourbon Condé, Duke of Enghien, then in his thirty-second year, faced a firing party. He died as men of royal blood have usually known how to die, without fear and without reproach.

Savary brought the news to Malmaison. After hearing it the Man of the Revolution remained alone, shut up in his study, for many hours. That day he did not walk in the gardens. At dinner that night, to a silent and sorrowful company, he uttered the words:

"They wish to destroy the Revolution in attacking my person; I will defend it, for I, I, *I* am the Revolution. They will be more cautious in future, for they will know of what we are capable."

"They" were more cautious in future. The plots ceased; but the Kings filled the world with their wrath. Joseph, too, was frankly horrified, while Napoleon's mother told her son, sternly, to his face, that he had committed "the deed of a criminal," the stain of which he would never be able to wipe out. The sneering Fouché, that wolf in sheep's clothing, who, in the days of Robespierre, had conducted the slaughter of boys and girls at Lyons, declared of the execution of the Duke of Enghien: "It was worse than a crime; it was a blunder." And another man more closely connected with murder—in this case the murder of a father—than he cared to remember, young Alexander of Russia, thought fit to express his horror and repudiation.

Napoleon in reply asked Alexander whether, had he known that the assassins of his late father were residing a mile or so across the Russian frontier, he would not have had them seized and executed. The sting of this retort lay in the fact that not one of the assassins of Mad Paul had been punished in any way.

Many people have tried to "justify" the Man by explaining away, or rather by attempting to explain away, his share in the trial and execution of the Duke of Enghien. This is merely fatuous. The truth is that an example was necessary to the safety of the Revolution, an example so terrible that would-be assassins would hesitate, for the future, to plot against the life of the one man who could save France from her enemies. France was at war with England, and Georges Cadoudal and Pichegru had been brought to France in an English ship commanded by an English officer; the Duke of Enghien was in the service of the King of England and was, by his own confession, waiting near the French frontier for orders to help in the invasion of France.

There, as I think, is the true significance of this episode. The last words which Napoleon himself ever committed to writing confirm this view. In a final codicil to his will, made at St. Helena a few days before his death, he declared:

"I caused the Duc d'Enghien to be arrested and tried because that step was essential to the safety, interest, and honour of the French people, when the Count of Artois was maintaining, by his own confession, sixty assassins in Paris. In similar circumstances I would act in the same way."

Of the plotters who had been arrested Georges Cadoudal was executed; Pichegru committed suicide in prison; Moreau and the brothers de Polignac and de Rivière were freely pardoned. It had become possible now to show mercy.

* * * * *

The Parliament, on May 18, 1804, two months after the death of the Duke of Enghien, created Napoleon "Emperor of the French."

Carriages were waiting at the door of the Senate House. They bore the worthy representatives of the French people to that Palace of St. Cloud in the orangery of which the Man's power had begun. Napoleon, in the uniform of a General, and accompanied by Josephine, received the senators. The wise Cambacérès, their President, approached and bent his knee.

"Sire——" he began. . . .

A moment or two later France heard, for the first time, that magic war-cry which was to resound from one end of Europe to the other: "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

Napoleon said, in the course of a short speech:

"I hope that France will never repent of the honours with which she shall invest my family. My spirit will no longer dwell with my posterity on that day when it ceases to merit the love and confidence of the Great Nation."

On December 2 of the same year, 1804, Napoleon and Josephine were crowned in Nôtre Dame by the Pope, who had come to Paris for that purpose—or rather they were anointed by the Pope, for, in order that no one should think that he took his crown from the Church, as did the Holy Roman Emperors, Napoleon crowned himself and then, afterwards, crowned Josephine.

"At that moment," says an eye witness, "he was really handsome and his countenance was lighted up with an expression of which no words can convey an idea."

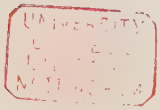
He whispered to Joseph, during the ceremony: "If our father could only see us now!"

Poor Charles would have been far more delighted than was his son, who knew the exact value of such displays.

In that vast audience, in the sweet and solemn old church, was Camilla Ilari, the Man's wet nurse, occupying a place of honour, and brought specially from Corsica to

[*Photo: Bulloz, Paris.*

THE CORONATION OF NAPOLEON AT NOTRE DAME.
From the picture by David in the Louvre.



be present. But Letitia was not in the Cathedral; after she had uttered her protest against the execution of the Duke of Enghien she left Paris and joined Lucien in Rome. Yet this good mother was pleased, later on, when her son ordered that her portrait should be included in the official picture of the ceremony.

And this is what *The Times* said, in a leading article published on December 15, 1804, about the great event:

" To us, we confess, all that appears worthy of remark or memory in that opprobrious day is that, amongst all the Royalists and Republicans of France, it was able to produce neither a Brutus nor a Chæreas. . . . Upon the *Place de la Concorde*, still stained with the blood of the lawful sovereign of France, were erected saloons and pavilions for dancing *waltzes*. Medals were given away to the populace; illuminations, artificial fireworks, pantomimes and buffoons, musicians, temporary theatres, everything was represented and administered that could intoxicate and divert this vain and wicked people from contemplating the crime they were committing."

That " crime " consisted in choosing for themselves the man who was to reign over them. England had already committed it a century before when she rejected the Old Pretender and chose as her King George I, Elector of Hanover.

Possibly Napoleon may have remembered this fact. At any rate, very soon after his coronation the new Emperor dared to write to King George III:

" Sire, my Brother,

" Called to the throne by Providence, the votes of the Senate, the people and the army, my first feeling was the desire for peace. France and England abuse their prosperity; they may continue their strife for ages; but will their Governments, in so doing, fulfil the most sacred of the duties which they owe to their people?

" And how will they answer to their consciences for so much blood uselessly shed and without the prospect of any good whatever to their subjects?

"I am not ashamed to make the first advances. I have, I flatter myself, sufficiently proved to the world that I fear none of the chances of war. It presents nothing which I have occasion to fear. Peace is the wish of my heart, but war has never been adverse to my glory.

"I conjure your Majesty, therefore, not to refuse yourself the satisfaction of giving peace to the world. Never was an occasion more favourable for calming the passions and giving ear only to the sentiments of humanity and reason. If that opportunity be lost, what limit can be assigned to a war which all my efforts have been unable to terminate?

"Your Majesty has gained more during these last ten years than the whole extent of Europe in riches and territory; your subjects are in the very highest state of prosperity; what can you expect from a war? To form a Coalition of the Continental Powers? Be assured the Coalition will remain at peace. A Coalition will only increase the strength and preponderance of the French Empire. To renew our intestine divisions? The times are no longer the same. To destroy our finances? Finances founded on a flourishing agriculture can never be destroyed. To wrest from France her colonies? They are to her only a secondary consideration; and your Majesty has already enough and to spare of these possessions.

"Upon reflection you must, I am persuaded, yourself arrive at the conclusion that the war is maintained without an object; and what a melancholy prospect for two great nations to contest merely for the sake of fighting! The world is surely large enough for both to live in; and reason has still sufficient power to find the means of reconciliation, if the inclination only is not wanting.

"I have now, at least, discharged a duty dear to my heart. May your Majesty trust to the sincerity of the sentiments which I have now expressed and the reality of my desire to give the most convincing proof of it.

"NAPOLEON."

A purely formal answer was sent by Lord Mulgrave, addressed to Talleyrand—in accordance with British

Constitutional practice. King George could say nothing till he had time to

" communicate with the Continental Powers to whom he is united in the most confidential manner, and particularly the Emperor of Russia, who has given the strongest proofs of the wisdom and elevation of the sentiments by which he is animated and of the lively interest which he takes in the security and independenee of Europe."

If only King George had known that Alexander of Russia had secretly offered his beloved Hanover to Frederick William of Prussia !

## CHAPTER L

### THE SUN OF AUSTERLITZ

The execution of the Duke of Enghien struck terror into the hearts of the Royalists; it taught all those whom Napoleon had summoned back to France that, while the Revolution was prepared to forgive its enemies, it was not prepared to succumb to them. The Coronation, on the other hand, taught the Men of the Terror that they need look for no return to the days of their power. Napoleon the Emperor was still the Man of the Revolution in its most liberal and enlightened form. As he said at St. Helena, "the Imperial Government was a kind of Republic."

He was still, too, the Man of France in the hour of France's great need. Indeed, both the execution of the Duke of Enghien and the Coronation in Nôtre Dame were really war measures for the defence of France. They weakened her internal foes; they added immensely to the strength of her leader. For Napoleon had now proclaimed to the world that blue blood was not different from red blood. He had not shrunk from spilling the blood of a King's son who was fighting against the Revolution; and he had mounted the throne of France at the bidding of the French people and been anointed by the Holy Father of Christendom. His sovereignty had its strong roots in every labourer's cottage in France.

These lessons were not lost on the Kings and they postponed, once again, for several months, the formation of the new Ring at which King George III and Pitt were labouring so diligently. For now, it was seen, Napoleon was absolute master of all the strength and all the resources and all the fierce enthusiasm of the French people. He

had trampled under his feet the enemies and defeatists who, formerly, had been so great a source of weakness to the Revolution.

But though the Kings hesitated, they watched Napoleon, nevertheless, with sleepless eyes, and they could scarcely contain themselves when the Italian Republic, which he had created, changed itself into a monarchy and offered him the Iron Crown of Savoy. When, in addition to becoming King of Italy, Napoleon took a leaf out of King George III's and Pitt's plan and added Genoa to France (King George III and Pitt had recommended the King of Sardinia to add Genoa to his dominions) royal indignation overflowed.

"This man," cried Alexander of Russia, "is insatiable. His ambition knows no bounds. He is a scourge of the world. He wants war. Well, he shall have it—and the sooner the better."

The truth is that, after many delays lasting over more than a year, the Kings were ready at last. As Dr. Holland Rose says in his *Life of Napoleon:*

"The high hopes nursed by the Pitt Ministry are seen in the following estimate of the forces that would be launched against France:

| | |
|---|---|
| Austria | 250,000 men |
| Russia | 180,000 ,, |
| Prussia | 100,000 ,, |
| (Pitt then refused to subsidize more than 100,000) | |
| Sweden | 16,000 ,, |
| Saxony | 16,000 ,, |
| Hesse and Brunswick | 16,000 ,, |
| Mecklenburg | 3,000 ,, |
| King of Sardinia | 25,000 ,, |
| Bavaria, Würtemburg, and Baden | 25,000 ,, |
| Naples | 20,000 ,, |
| Total | 651,000 |

"In a PS. he [Pitt] adds that the support of the King of Sardinia would not be needed and that England had private arrangements with Naples as to subsidies."

Thus, more than half a million men, the greatest force the world had ever known, were—so Pitt thought—ready to march against the Man of the Revolution. A large number of them were being paid for by English money. England, as Dr. Rose points out, " as a set-off to her lack of troops, agreed to subsidize her allies to the extent of £1,250,000 a year for every 100,000 men actually employed in the war."

The British Navy in the Baltic and Mediterranean, using Malta as a base of operations in the last-mentioned sea, would, of course, co-operate with the land forces.

Thus the Kings had men, money, and ships in abundance. What had Napoleon got to oppose to this tremendous army ? He had, first and foremost, himself and his cause. Then he had his wits, and those wits of his and the fear and distrust which, very naturally, the Kings bore to one another, enabled him to keep greedy, timid Prussia out of the war and to bring Bavaria and other lesser states over to his side. Finally he had about 150,000 troops who had endured nearly a year's intensive training at the camp on the cliffs of Boulogne. Subtracting Prussia from Pitt's list, and making the necessary adjustments, this man who, in Alexander's words, " wanted war," possessed one soldier against every two soldiers possessed by the Kings. That is to say, his position was dangerous and desperate in the extreme.

But, even so, the Kings were determined to take no risks. Advice reached the King of Naples to make peace with Napoleon in order to induce him to remove the troops he had sent to reoccupy Tarento, in that King's dominions, at the time when England refused to give up Malta. It was hinted that, as soon as the French troops had gone from Naples, the new treaty of peace could be broken and a small army of English and Russian soldiers (now being gathered at Corfu and Malta) could be received into Naples. The united English, Russians, and Neapolitans would then march together up the " leg " of Italy and strike the Man in the back.

The King of Naples took this advice, and Napoleon,

who did not, on this occasion, suspect a trap, at once agreed to a treaty which might easily have brought about his ruin. Can we wonder that a few experiences of this kind convinced him finally and for ever that no King could be trusted ?

The month was September 1805. Napoleon was in Paris sticking pins into maps. His army was on the cliffs of Boulogne. His navy, meant to help in the invasion of England—though personally I doubt if the Man would ever have embarked on that enterprise while the Kings remained active and powerful behind him—his navy, to his great wrath, had shirked an encounter with Nelson and, instead of sailing up-channel as he had ordered, had sailed down-channel. It lay in Cadiz—an immense fleet, half French and half Spanish, under that weak-kneed but personally brave man, Admiral Villeneuve. The Kings were on the march on those old, old lines of march by which the invaders of France have always come : the line through the North of Italy, the line up the Danube and across the Rhine, the line down from the north, across the flatlands.

The Man of the Revolution thrust one of his red pins into the town of Strassburg, near to which the Duke of Enghien had been taken, and another into the town of Ulm. The great city of Vienna, the sacred capital of Francis of Austria, received a glance of the grey eyes. Then an order to march towards the Rhine was sent to Boulogne. Napoleon had decided to strike through the wall of steel at one point and to leave the other points, for the moment, to take care of themselves.

There followed such a spear-thrust as is nowhere else recorded in the story of mankind. The Man rushed to the East of France in that famous travelling-carriage of his with its team of six great Normandy horses. Before September had run its course his soldiers of Boulogne, now become " The Grand Army " and transported across France, beheld the " little man on the white horse," the little man with the great heart, clad in his grey riding-coat and with the immortal cocked hat on his head.

There were night marches, swift as the swoop of the eagle, and small skirmishes and long day marches—the while the Man in his midnight tent bent over his maps and plans and replaced his pins. And, suddenly, these soldiers of France and of the Revolution realized that they had marched right round one of the armies of the Kings and cut it off from all chance of ever returning home. On October 20, these astonished soldiers, who had scarcely begun to fight, beheld the strangest spectacle of their lives, an army of 30,000 picked troops in the white uniforms of Imperial Austria, with their General at their head, filing before Napoleon outside the fortress of Ulm and laying down their unused arms.

"Our Emperor," they cried in utter bewilderment, "has found a new way of making war; he no longer makes it with our arms, but with our legs."

Napoleon, standing in front of his Imperial Guard, that "Old Guard," which he loved with so deep a love, received the homage of the vanquished. The Austrian General, poor Mack, came the first, bowed down with grief, his sword in his hand. He held out his sword to Napoleon, saying:

"Here is the unfortunate Mack."

As he spoke, as if by some miracle of Providence, the sun burst forth from dark skies, lighting up the face of the Man.

The Kings, when the news of Ulm reached them, were thrown into consternation. Wildly they implored Frederick William of Prussia to make haste and come to their rescue. But Frederick William did not stir. Alexander at once resolved to try his own hand at diplomacy and announced his intention of rushing to Berlin, *en route* for the front of battle, to make a personal appeal to Frederick William.

Alexander duly arrived at Berlin and was duly welcomed with royal salutes. The Queen of Prussia expressed herself as being enchanted with the handsome visitor and hoped that the King, her husband, would lose not a moment in agreeing to everything that was required of

him. But Frederick William, that Royal Vicar of Bray, was overwhelmed with doubt. Napoleon was winning already. Suppose that Napoleon managed to win altogether ?

Alexander kept urging that the Man on his way from Boulogne to Ulm had marched some of his troops across the Prussian lands and that this, in itself, was really an act of war.

" Are you not going to avenge such an insult ? " he asked Frederick William, haughtily.

Frederick William did not know. Sometimes he thought he ought to ; but at other times his mind kept turning back to the Rhineland bishoprics with which Napoleon had fed him at the time of the " secularizations." The same liberal hand, he knew, now held Hanover in store.

And so, even while he and his embarrassing guest stood together, in the vault in which lay the coffin of Frederick the Great, he could not make up his mind. Alexander, carried away as usual on one of his uplifting waves of enthusiasm, clasped Frederick William in his arms and began to weep.

" Let us swear on the coffin of the great Frederick," he cried, " an oath of everlasting friendship."

The Royal Vicar of Bray had no option but to fall in with that suggestion. But as soon as Alexander had gone he sent off a messenger to Napoleon. This messenger carried merely a formal protest against the trespassing French troops.

Meanwhile Alexander took occasion once more to tell the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Pitt, that if George III would only hand over Hanover to Frederick William of Prussia all would be well. Poor Pitt ! He knew that he might as well ask King George for one of his hands. And yet, with Napoleon, marching swiftly to Vienna, it was, indeed, tremendously important to get Frederick William to come to the rescue. Pitt was at his wits' end, when suddenly he had an idea. It was no use thinking about Hanover ; *but there was Holland—*

that Holland which the "greedy and unscrupulous" Napoleon had actually refused, at England's order, to restore to her freedom and her independence. Holland might well be given to Frederick William.

Even Holland, however, proved less attractive in Frederick William's eyes than Hanover. Frederick William might glance at Russia and at England, but always his eyes came back, on the instant, to those moving columns of the French Army, marching, now, along the banks of the Danube towards Vienna.

And well, indeed, might he suffer himself to be mesmerized by that spectacle. For this army had travelled in twenty days from Boulogne to the Rhine, had captured an entire army in its stride, and was now, after another forty days, approaching the capital of Francis of Austria.

The Man, however, did not enter Vienna; he went at once to the Palace of Schoenbrun on the outskirts of the city. He had a second great army to face and he knew that, if he advanced to meet that army, he would be leaving Prussia behind him. Frederick William would thus be in a position to stab him in the back. Could he trust Frederick William?

A hint arrived that Frederick William could not be trusted, that, in fact, he was betraying every one in turn, Napoleon himself, Alexander, and even good King George. And then came dependable news that Frederick William had actually signed a treaty with Russia and Austria by which he promised to act as an "armed peacemaker" between these two allies and Napoleon. "If the Man refuses to permit my peacemaking," said Frederick William, "I will attack him."

But—there was always a "but" where the Royal Vicar of Bray was concerned—a month was to be allowed before any definite warlike action should be taken by Prussia. A month! It was enough. The Man resolved to give instant battle to the great army in front of him, which comprised the united forces of Russia and Austria under the personal command of Alexander and of Francis.

On December 1, 1805, the anniversary of the eve of his coronation, Napoleon drew up his soldiers on the field of Austerlitz.

He was calm with the confidence of genius. But he did not hide from himself the fact that a terrible task awaited him on the morrow. He had 70,000 men against 90,000, and, if he was defeated, it was probable that Frederick William of Prussia would instantly fall upon him. For that, as he was learning, was the way of Kings. Had not the King—and Queen—of Naples already broken their treaty with him, before the ink was dry on it, and admitted to their kingdom English soldiers from Malta and Russian soldiers from Corfu? The Man's eyes flashed as he thought of this treachery; and then they grew dark with regret. In these days between the Battle of Ulm and of Austerlitz, Napoleon had heard the news of the mighty sea battle of Trafalgar. *In one awful swoop the Sea-Hawk of England had destroyed both the French and the Spanish fleets.* The figure of great-hearted Nelson dying on the *Victory* in the moment of his supreme triumph was certainly before the eyes of Napoleon on that eve of Austerlitz.

The Man made his dispositions and then went forth, at dead of night, to visit the outposts. There was mist on the winter ground, but through the mist shone the camp-fires of the enemy. Soldiers were lying on the frozen earth, under the rude straw shelters which they had made for themselves—these incomparable soldiers of France, the heroes already of immortal victories. The slim figure in the grey riding-coat moved silently through the silent ranks.

Suddenly a soldier sprang up, rousing his neighbour as he did so. He snatched a handful of straw and wound it about a pole. He lit the straw in the embers of one of the fires and held it aloft. Another of the same weird torches was lighted and held aloft, another, and another and another, until the red glare found the figure of the Man, and held it for every eye to see. Some one glanced at a watch.

"It is after midnight. It is December 2, the anniversary of the coronation."

And then, from thousands of lips burst forth that immortal war-cry of the French: "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

The cry mingled with the red glare and was hurled across the night to the bivouacs of the enemy. Its magic woke, in the rough, crowding faces of the soldiers, a strange tenderness of love and devotion. Men stretched out their hands to touch the coat of the "Little Corporal" who, while they slept, waited and watched over the happiness and the glory of France.

And then the torches went out and the silence, once more, gathered those Crusaders of a new world and a new hope. The Man resumed his way to his quarters; the winter mists grew denser on the fatal Lake of Tellnitz.

Fourteen hours later the "Sun of Austerlitz" shone down on that frozen Lake of Tellnitz, crowded with fugitives from the thunderbolts of Napoleon. The armies of Russia and of Austria were broken as a strong man snaps a twig in his hands. The Emperor Alexander and the Holy Emperor Francis were already being swept away from the field in the tide of terror and defeat.

They rode wildly into the shadows of the night.

## CHAPTER LI

### A RING OF FRIENDSHIP

Austerlitz was a second and a greater Marengo. From immense danger France and her new Emperor passed to overwhelming triumph.

Yet Napoleon, on the night after his victory, was not triumphant. Rather, according to eye-witnesses, he was anxious and nervous. The victory might not be so great as it seemed, and there was Frederick William of Prussia, with his huge army, still in a position to strike from behind. But the thought that he might now be able to achieve peace buoyed him up. On the night before the battle he had proclaimed to his soldiers :

" Let every one be thoroughly impressed with this thought, that it behoves us to conquer these hirelings of England who are animated with such bitter hatred against our nation. This victory will put an end to the campaign . . . and then the peace which I shall make will be worthy of my people, of you, and of myself."

On the night after the battle he wrote :

" Soldiers,

" I am satisfied with you ; in the Battle of Austerlitz you have justified all that I expected from your intrepidity. You have decorated your eagles with immortal glory. An army of 100,000 men, commanded by the Emperors of Russia and Austria, has been, in less than four hours, either cut in pieces or dispersed. Those who escaped your weapons are drowned in the lakes.

" . . . Thus in two months, this third Coalition has been vanquished and dissolved. Peace cannot now be

far distant; but, as I promised my people before I passed the Rhine, I will make only such a peace as gives us guarantees and ensures rewards to our allies. . . ."

Next day, December 3, he wrote:

"Soldiers, you have won peace; you will once more see France. Give my name to your children; you have my permission to do so, and if, among them, there should be one worthy of us, I will leave him all my worldly goods and declare him my successor."

Josephine had come with her husband as far as the Rhine. He sent her a brief note on the day after the battle:

"I have beaten the Russian and Austrian Army commanded by the two Emperors. I am rather fagged. I have bivouacked eight days in the open air through nights sufficiently keen."

Two days later he wrote to her again:

"At last, behold peace restored again to the Continent; it is to be hoped that it is going to be to the world. The English will not know how to face us."

Josephine did not answer these letters. Napoleon wrote:

"It is a long time since I had news of you. Have the grand fêtes . . . made you forget the poor soldiers, who live covered with mud, rain, and blood?"

And then:

"Deign from the heights of your grandeur to concern yourself a little with your slaves."

Napoleon's confidence that peace was in sight arose from the meeting he had just had with Francis of Austria, at a spot between the two armies. Francis and Alexander had found shelter, after the battle, in a country house; but they were now anything but friendly to one another, for Alexander, so generous in word, so ungenerous in deed, declared that he and his army had been badly treated by the Austrians. Wherefore Francis came alone, in a big lumbering carriage, to meet the Man.

Napoleon was waiting for him, warming his hands in

front of a fire which the soldiers had lighted. The big carriage rolled up to the fire and the Man in the grey riding-coat turned to receive his visitor—this Holy Roman Emperor against whom he had been fighting almost from his boyhood.

The door of the carriage was opened. Francis descended. Napoleon made a slight movement as if to offer the embrace usual between Kings, but instantly checked himself. Francis had apparently not noticed that movement. Francis walked to the fire.

"Such," said Napoleon apologetically, indicating the bivouac, "are the palaces which your Majesty has obliged me to inhabit for these three months."

Francis's dull, weary eyes showed not a flicker of interest. Without looking at his companion, he replied:

"The abode in them makes you so thriving that you have no right to be angry with me for it."

After that one of the French officers, who were kept at a respectful distance, heard Francis say:

"The English are merchants of human flesh."

Napoleon afterwards told how Francis had wished to include Alexander of Russia in the peacemaking and how he had refused to listen to that idea.

"Take my advice," declared the Man, "do not mix your cause with that of the Emperor Alexander."

Francis prepared to go. He looked happier than when he arrived. He actually embraced the pale young man who had defeated him. The young man handed him into his old carriage, which then lurched away. Napoleon mounted his grey horse and rode back to the village of Austerlitz. An officer, who had been sent to see Alexander of Russia, reported that that Emperor had said to him:

"Your master [Napoleon] has shown himself very great. I acknowledge all the power of his genius, and as for myself, I shall retire since my ally is satisfied."

Was Alexander beginning to love Napoleon also? The Man would dearly have liked an answer to that question, because, if he could open the way to peace with Russia

as he had opened the way to peace with Austria, the real fruits of his victory would be in his hands. Alexander's hurried departure made him a little uneasy. There was still the army of Frederick William of Prussia to be guarded against.

Napoleon had a new plan of peacemaking in his mind—namely, to draw closer to France that ring of small countries which King George III and Pitt had hoped to use as "stepping-stones" against her. He did not wish these countries to be French; but he wished them to be the close friends of France so that he might act as their protector, and prevent the Kings from trying to tamper with them in any way. He thought, and believed, that this would be better than trying to keep his soldiers in foreign lands. If he left the Kings alone perhaps they would leave him alone also.

Three of the Rulers of the Rhine had helped him—rather grudgingly it is true—during the war which was just over: the Elector of Bavaria, the Elector of Würtemburg, and the Elector of Baden. He resolved to invite all three to join his "Ring of Friendship."

All three, as he knew, were waiting impatiently for such an invitation, especially the enormously fat, very bad-tempered Elector of Bavaria, who, before the Battle of Austerlitz, had actually cursed the French for marching across his lands, shouting at one of the officers sent to apologize to him:

"What business has your Bonaparte here? Shall a prince of yesterday, a parvenu sovereign, offer violence to me? To me, a prince of old time, of the race of princes!"

Yet His Serene Highness, even in his anger, had "winked the other eye": he might not object so much, so he had hinted, if a crown were, by any chance, to descend on his own head and he were to be changed from a mere Elector of the Holy Roman Emperor to a King. When Napoleon heard that story he burst out laughing:

"Let him be a King," he exclaimed, "if that is all he wants."

The fat Elector would snatch at his crown now, after the Battle of Austerlitz, when his "rich relation," Francis of Austria, could threaten him no longer. Napoleon decided that, in offering him the crown, he would ask him for the hand of his daughter, Augusta, for Eugène Beauharnais, Josephine's son. That marriage perhaps would set an enduring seal on friendship.

He meant also to ask for the daughter of the Elector of Würtemburg—Princess Catherine—for his brother Jerome—a more delicate request seeing that the girl's mother was a daughter of King George of England, and that the girl herself had already been publicly betrothed to the son of the Elector of Baden and that Jerome had contracted, in America, a marriage with a Miss Paterson —to which, however, his mother had refused her necessary consent. Napoleon proposed that, if all these difficulties could be overcome, the son of the Elector of Baden should marry, instead of the Princess Catherine of Würtemburg, Josephine's second cousin, the pretty Stephanie de Beauharnais.

So much for the Kings; the common people, in these new friendly states, should not be neglected. Napoleon insisted that the principles of the French Revolution should be set up in the Rhineland and in the other countries around France—the principles of equal rights and equal laws and equal taxes for all men. As Dr. Holland Rose says:

"The crops of the Swabian peasant were now comparatively safe from the deer of his Translucency of the castle hard by; for the spirit of the French Revolution breathed upon the old game laws and robbed them of their terrors. And the German patriot of to-day must still confess that the first impulse of reform, however questionable its motives and brutal its application, came from the new Charlemagne."

"The new Charlemagne!" Did Napoleon in building his Ring of Friendship which included a Grand Duchy for his sister Caroline and her husband Murat—did he

deserve to be likened to that great Emperor of the year 800, the founder of the Holy Roman Empire, who, in Rome, on a fateful Christmas Day, received from the Pope his Imperial crown, thus uniting the earthly with the heavenly power? I think myself that he did, and that, not because the Holy Roman Empire, after existing for 1006 years was about to come to an end under his sovereignty, but because the Man of the Revolution was the symbol to his fellows of the new "power from Heaven" —freedom from the hands which oppressed. The throne of Napoleon was built—let this never be forgotten—by the work-worn hands of peasants and poor folk turned soldiers in defence of what they esteemed to be a most holy cause, the sovereignty of the common people, Democracy.

## CHAPTER LII

### THE MATCHMAKER OF THE RHINE

From Austerlitz, Napoleon rode to Vienna, to the palace of Francis of Austria whom he had so lately met. There was awaiting him there the messenger of Frederick William of Prussia—the King who had offended all the other Kings by hunting with the hounds and running with the hare.

Napoleon was anxious to make a permanent peace with Frederick William; but he wanted real peace, and not merely a breathing-space between wars. When the messenger of Frederick William was shown into the room in which he was working, he received him sternly.

The messenger Haugwitz, who had, tactfully, put on for the occasion the Cordon of the Legion of Honour, Napoleon's new ribbon of merit, bowed low and offered his own and his royal master's congratulations on the victory of Austerlitz. He unbent himself. The grey eyes were fixed on his face:

"Thank you," said the Man. "But will you tell me whether, had I lost that battle, you would, to-day, have mentioned the friendship which you say your master bears me?"

Haugwitz stammered. He knew that Napoleon was thinking of the scene in the vault of Frederick the Great, when Frederick William allowed himself to be embraced by Alexander of Russia and swore to fight with Alexander against the French.

"Your Majesty!" he deprecated.

Napoleon jumped up. The blood mounted to his pale cheeks.

"So," he cried, "your master was ready to attack

me, was he ? He was playing a double game, pretending to be my friend and yet signing treaties against me. Your master has no mind of his own ; he is ruled by the Queen, by women, by the Court ladies."

The storm blew itself out. Finally Napoleon said :

" I am still ready to make peace."

He then proposed that Frederick William should become the open friend of France, ready to defend her against her enemies if need be and having the right to be defended by her, in his turn, against his enemies. If Prussia accepted this offer, she should have Hanover for her own, in exchange for a few small pieces of land which the fat King of Bavaria —among others—needed to round off his new kingdom.

Haugwitz was dazzled, amazed. For he knew that his master, Frederick William, desired, more than anything else on earth, to possess Hanover. There and then he accepted Napoleon's offer.

Napoleon, as soon as he was left alone, sent an announcement of this good news to Talleyrand who was busy, at the moment, settling the details of peace with Francis of Austria. Francis had been inclined to hold back his signature because he had a vague hope that Frederick William might, after all, play the man and come to the rescue of the beaten Kings whom he had sworn to help. In that case a new Ring of the Kings could, perhaps, have been formed and the tables turned on Napoleon. The news that Frederick William's messenger had made peace snuffed out poor Francis's last hope.

And so final peace was made with Austria. Instantly the Man turned to deal with that other King who had betrayed his trust—the King of Naples. In Naples, as in Prussia, a weak King was under the control of a determined Queen.

" Queen Caroline," declared Napoleon, " shall cease to reign in Naples. . . . You know with what generosity I have treated Naples. But that is over now."

And so a French army was sent to occupy Naples and to put Joseph on its throne in order that the most abused and oppressed country in Europe—and the most bitter

of all the foes of the Revolution—might be turned into a friendly state. I often wonder how anybody can suggest that Napoleon was acting wrongly, or like a tyrant, in taking this step, for as Mr. Richardson says in his admirable *Dictionary of Napoleon :*

" The rule of Queen Caroline and her husband was nothing short of a scandal. The taxes were inordinately heavy ; a feudal system of a peculiarly oppressive nature obtained ; the law, too, was in a curious tangle and so frequently overruled by royal prerogative that it was practically a dead letter ; while the courts of justice were corrupt in the extreme. In such an atmosphere trade languished, and by reason of the feudal dues and the privileges of the aristocratic class agriculture was no longer pursued. Brigandage, however, flourished in a congenial soil, and in the towns the *lazzaroni* formed a serious menace to life and property. Another class which benefited at the expense of the helpless poor was the clergy, who formed a large proportion of the population."

Joseph, as King of Naples, changed all that, and, by common consent, gave to the Neapolitans the blessings of good and just laws and an honest Government.

The foundations of the Ring of Friendship were now laid with one exception, that of Holland. This country remained independent of France though there were French troops in it to prevent English troops from landing on its shores. Napoleon decided not to interfere with that freedom but to offer Holland, as its King, his own brother Louis, the boy for whom, in the old days of Auxonne and Valence, he had cooked the " nourishing broth " and acted the part of valet and schoolmaster. The Dutch were invited to consider this offer. Meanwhile a porcelain cup on which was painted a portrait of the Princess Augusta of Bavaria had been sent to Eugène Beauharnais, who was acting at the time as Viceroy of Italy. With the cup went a letter from Napoleon :

" I have arrived in Munich. I have arranged your marriage with the Princess Augusta. It has been

announced. This morning the Princess visited me and I spoke with her for a long time. She is very pretty. You will find herewith her portrait on a cup; but she is much better looking."

The faithful Eugène at once crossed the Alps and came to Munich where, on January 18, 1806, in the presence of his mother and stepfather, he was married to the daughter of Napoleon's new King, his fat Majesty of Bavaria.

Napoleon deserves credit as a matchmaker, for this union proved to be one of the happiest in the world. Eight years later Eugène wrote to his wife on their wedding day:

"I need only think of to-day, my dear Augusta, to feel sure that Providence watches over me. What happiness and what charms do I owe this January 14, which united my destiny to that of the loveliest, the best, and most virtuous of women."

Augusta was not less happy, for about this time, when her husband's mother was divorced from Napoleon, she wrote to him:

"Blotted out from the list of the great, we shall be inscribed upon that of the happy. Is not that better?"

Not less successful was the union between Jerome and Catherine of Würtemburg, for, when the star of Napoleon sank for ever, this gentle lady utterly refused to obey her father and leave her husband. She endured endless troubles and misfortunes in order to be beside him, and actually had to escape from her father's "jailers." On her way to Switzerland, where Jerome was living, she met Napoleon going to exile in Elba. Napoleon embraced her. Of this incident she afterwards wrote:

"That mute embrace was eloquent and revealed the feelings of a hero who had been betrayed."

In 1818 both husband and wife asked the British Government for permission to go to St. Helena; but this permission was curtly refused.

Nor was the third match of these days, that of Stephanie de Beauharnais and the Prince of Baden, less happy. At

first, it is true, the gay French girl was rather coldly disposed to her German spouse. But later, when the days of adversity for Napoleon came, and all his friends begged her husband to be rid of her, the good Prince showed her his affection. He was taken ill soon afterwards and she nursed him with extreme devotion till his death. One of her daughters became the Duchess of Hamilton.

## CHAPTER LIII

### THE HISTORY OF A HINT

Napoleon came back to Paris on January 26, 1806, at midnight—just as he had done after the Battle of Marengo, and for the same reason. He wanted no fuss, no triumphal arches. Early next morning he was at work on the taffeta-covered sofa rescuing France from a terrible money crisis which had threatened to make her bankrupt. Within a week or two he was planning the Bank of France, the new University of Paris, canals, new bridges over the Seine, a better water-supply, wider streets, handsomer buildings, nobler works of art. His Parliament voted him a statue, and it stands to-day, in the Place Vendome, that tall pillar forged out of the cannon taken at the Battle of Austerlitz. He, himself, began to build the Arc de Triomphe and the "*Petit Triomphe*" as tributes to his incomparable soldiers.

And meanwhile a slap in the face came from Frederick William, who sent Haugwitz to Paris to say that, while he had accepted Hanover, he could not accept a full alliance with France.

"Let our friendship be a friendship—not a binding engagement to fight for one another."

Napoleon guessed instantly what this meant. Frederick William, he perceived, was already getting into touch with the other Kings. Probably a new Ring of the Kings was being formed.

"If," he said to Haugwitz, "Prussia is frankly, publicly, on my side I have no more European Coalitions to fear, and without a European Coalition on my hands I will soon settle matters with England. But I want

nothing short of this certainty to induce me to make you a present of Hanover and to feel convinced that I act wisely in giving it to you."

And so Frederick William signed, and received his payment—King George's "father's house." Meanwhile, in Russia, Alexander was moping over the poor figure he had cut at the Battle of Austerlitz. It took his clever young friend, the Pole Czartoryski, all his time to restore the sulky Emperor to cheerfulness:

"Austria," said Czartoryski, "is abased; but she detests her conqueror; Prussia is divided between two parties, but she will finally yield herself up to the German sentiment which predominates in her. In managing these powers, wait till the moment arrives when one or the other shall be ready to act. Till then you are out of reach; you can remain some time without making either peace or war. . . . Cease not to be allied with England, and you will oblige Napoleon to give you your due."

Alexander shrugged his shoulders.

"Napoleon!" he cried. "When we pretend to attack this man we are children presuming to tackle a giant. Without Prussia we cannot renew the war."

Alexander sent off kind and consoling messages to Francis of Austria and went out of his way to be charming to a messenger, the Duke of Brunswick, whom Frederick William had sent to him to explain why he, Frederick William, had taken Hanover from Napoleon.

"Prussia," said the young Emperor of Russia to the Duke of Brunswick, "will be forced sooner or later to fight Napoleon. When that happens I will serve under your command and take pride in learning the art of war in your school."

Napoleon heard of these meetings of Alexander with Frederick William's messenger and began, once more, to feel uneasy. Was Frederick William going to betray him as the King and Queen of Naples had betrayed him? Happily, in this anxiety, there was one thing upon which he could absolutely count: King George III would never forgive Frederick William, or make friends with him, so

long as Frederick William kept Hanover. And Frederick William would never, if he could help it, give Hanover up. Napoleon built all his hopes of preventing the formation of a new Ring of the Kings on this fact of Hanover. His letter to King George proposing peace had not been answered and so he went on making new preparations for attacking England.

But, at this moment, came the news of the death of William Pitt, the English Minister who had been the chief enemy of Revolutionary France. Austerlitz and the eating-up of Hanover by Frederick William had killed Pitt. His place was taken by a Coalition—a mixture of the War Makers of England and of her peacemakers. Lord Grenville, Napoleon's old enemy, became Prime Minister; Fox, Napoleon's old friend, became Foreign Secretary.

The chance, that a ruffian came to see Fox and offered, for a sum of money, to kill Napoleon, allowed this great Englishman to write to Paris warning the Man of his danger and expressing his horror at the proposal. Napoleon at once sent a message of thanks to Fox, and, soon afterwards, peace meetings between England and France began in Paris.

But no sooner was a beginning made than a hitch occurred: England demanded that Russia must be associated with her in the meetings seeing that they were allies. Napoleon, who knew how hard Alexander of Russia was trying to make Frederick William turn traitor to France, refused this demand. Fox might be well-disposed; Alexander was certainly an enemy. The peace meetings were broken off and would not have been resumed but for the fact that Alexander, suddenly, offered to send a peacemaker of his own to Paris. England had, now, no reason to refuse to discuss peace singly and by herself, and so a three-cornered discussion began.

Alexander's peacemaker, Oubril, seemed to be the most accommodating creature on earth. He agreed to all Napoleon's terms and quickly signed a treaty embodying them. Napoleon's grey eyes narrowed. How came it

that Alexander, who, a few months before, had been moving heaven and earth to get Frederick William to fight France, was now, himself, so anxious to fall in with France's desires? Was it possible that this peacemaking of Alexander was merely a "flirtation" opened in order to make Frederick William uneasy and to induce him to declare himself?

King George's peacemaker was exacting; he had, above all things, to get back Hanover for its "rightful owner." There was a real difficulty here, for Napoleon was at peace with Frederick William, whereas King George was at war with him—about Hanover—and had recently seized 300 Prussian ships. Napoleon, moreover, was at war with King George. He could not break a solemn treaty with a friend, however doubtful, in order to oblige an enemy.

So he told King George's peacemaker, Lord Yarmouth, that, if no explanations were meantime asked for by England about Hanover, he would try to persuade Frederick William to give that country back to King George of his own free will, in the interests of the world's peace. He would also, of course, see that Frederick William did not lose by his generosity.

This statement was made privately to Lord Yarmouth. It was obvious that, until Napoleon had time to approach Frederick William of Prussia, Lord Yarmouth was bound to respect the confidence given him—for Prussia was smarting under the humiliation she had inflicted on herself by not assisting the other Kings and was in an excessively sensitive state of mind. Even a whisper to the effect that she might lose Hanover was certain—unless the utmost tact was displayed—to rouse her to frenzy.

Lord Yarmouth did not respect the confidence given to him. On the contrary, as Dr. Holland Rose points out:

"During the negotiations at Paris Lord Yarmouth privately informed Lucchesini, the Prussian Ambassador, that Talleyrand made no difficulty about the restitution of Hanover to George III. The news when forwarded to

Berlin, at the close of July, caused a nervous flutter in ministerial circles, where every effort was being made to keep on good terms with France."

Naturally Frederick William was amazed—because as yet he had heard nothing from Napoleon either about the necessity of giving back to King George " his father's house," if peace was to be made with England, or of the compensations which he himself would receive if he agreed to this restitution. He imagined himself betrayed by Napoleon, turned his back on his French allies, and wrote to Alexander of Russia on August 1806 :

" If the news be true [*i.e.* that King George was to regain Hanover], if he [Napoleon] is capable of perfidy so black, be convinced, Sire, that it is not merely a question of Hanover between him and me, but that he has decided to make war against me at all costs. . . . Tell me, Sire, I conjure you, if I may hope that your troops will be within reach of succour for me, and if I may count on them in case of aggression. . . ."

Lord Yarmouth's hint to the Prussian Ambassador had " done the trick." It had led Frederick William to look on the Man as a liar and a scoundrel and had sent that timid creature whimpering off to Alexander of Russia for help—in other words, it had created a new Ring of the Kings against the French Revolution—the fourth Coalition.

Alexander was immensely pleased with Frederick William's letter and wrote " a cheering response, advising him to settle his differences with England and Sweden and assuring him of help." Meanwhile Alexander's peace messenger, Oubril, was hurrying back to his master with the treaty which, on his Master's behalf, he had signed with Napoleon. This treaty had been made privately between the Russian and Napoleon, and its contents were not to be shown to Lord Yarmouth until Alexander had seen them.

But it so happened, it may, or may not, have been an accident, that Lord Yarmouth's mistress was installed in the same house in Paris as that in which Alexander's

messenger had taken a flat. So when Lord Yarmouth got a hint that the Russian peacemaker had finished his business and was packing up to hurry off home with his treaty, he paid, on July 21, 1806, a midnight visit to this lady. He was thus able, *without attracting notice*, to get into immediate touch with the Russian. *It was immediately after this that Lord Yarmouth dropped his hint about Hanover to Frederick William's ambassador.*

What the English War Makers desired was now almost certain to happen, and, as we have seen, did happen. Frederick William thought himself betrayed by Napoleon and, at the same time, deserted by Alexander, and, on August 8, rushed to Alexander who welcomed him and his huge army with open arms. Oubril, Alexander's peacemaker to Napoleon, got back to St. Petersburg early in August, just at the time when the good news of August 8 about Frederick William's break with Napoleon was arriving.

Alexander promptly refused to endorse Oubril's treaty. There was no longer any need for "flirtation" with Napoleon seeing that Frederick William had declared himself that the Prussian Army was at last available.

Meanwhile the English "peacemakings" were still going on in Paris. Poor Fox was coming swiftly to his death-bed and the real negotiations were in the hands of the War Makers. They were farcical. Fox, the dying man, knew nothing of the betrayal of Napoleon's confidence by Lord Yarmouth, and hence was amazed that Napoleon, instead of signing the very satisfactory treaty offered him at his, Fox's, suggestion at the end of July, put off signing from day to day. Fox could not realize, as Napoleon now only too clearly realized, that his generous treaty was being used by the War Makers, King George III, Grenville, and others, to lull the Man into a false sense of security until the new Ring of the Kings, with Prussia welded into it, should be soundly constructed. While poor Fox was thinking about the Island of Sicily and lamenting the "shuffling, insincere" ways of the French, Napoleon had his eyes fixed on the shores of the

Baltic, where the armies of Sweden and Prussia and Russia were gathering for his overthrow—thanks to the hints by which Lord Yarmouth had betrayed him.

The Man had reason to be thankful that he had delayed signing Fox's generous treaty. On September 3 (a fortnight after the news might have reached him if despatch had been shown) he learned that Alexander of Russia had thrown his treaty to the winds and was arming himself for war. That Napoleon had played straight with Prussia is shown by this letter of Frederick William's to Alexander dated September 6.

"Bonaparte has left me at my ease, for not only does he not enter into any explanation about my armaments, but he has even forbidden his ministers to give and receive any explanations whatever. It appears, then, that it is I who am to take the initiative. My troops are marching on all sides to hasten that moment."

## CHAPTER LIV

### "WE ARE DOOMED TO WAR"

Napoleon had had his second dose of the methods of the English War Lords. That dose filled him with gloom and despair.

"We have been deceived too often," he said bitterly.

And from that hour he dismissed from his mind the illusion that between the Kings and the Revolution, between the old world and the new, between the "Glittering Beings" and the common folk there could be any compromise. The English people, he believed, were for peace and always had been for peace; but the English people were controlled by a small band of War Lords, princes and merchant princes, who, as events had shown, were ready to go to all lengths to destroy the new ideals which France had given to Europe.

The Man of the Revolution vowed that he would destroy the War Lords of England or be destroyed by them, and he made ready to fling into the awful furnace of a life-and-death struggle all that he was and all that he possessed:

"Till now," he declared, "the Kings of Europe have played with the generosity of France. When one Coalition is conquered another immediately springs up. . . . It behoves France to be less generous in future; conquered states must be retained till the general peace. . . . It is better, since we are doomed to war, to plunge in wholly than to go in but halfway."

In other words, Napoleon's whole outlook had changed. He did not mean, any longer, to seek security for the Revolution behind a Ring of Friendship; that method,

like the "Go Slow" method of Carnot, was evidently useless against a hatred which never rested and never cooled. The Revolution must go forth against the Kings and the War Lords and strike them down. It must destroy their power to attack it, or by that power be itself destroyed. There was no middle way. The Revolution, in short, must conquer Europe in order to live.

Napoleon certainly reached this conclusion with great reluctance, for he, better than other men, could foresee the dangers to himself and to France of such a conquest, supposing that complete success attended his efforts. The vanquished countries, occupied and held down by French troops, would, inevitably, hate their oppressors. In every nation there would be aroused the spirit which had made Corsica so formidable to all her conquerors. Europe would be full of "Paoli's men" ready to die for freedom from French dictation.

On the other hand, until Europe was conquered, the War Lords of England could not be dealt with. English intrigue, English influence, and English money had already built up ring after ring of war around France. That process would continue, so long as the Kings remained in control of their vast resources. How could France hope to contend for ever against so many enemies?

Time, Napoleon saw, was short. He must strike before France began to grow weary of the unequal combat, before the powers of the Kings were fully mobilized against him. He must strike, too, swiftly and with overwhelming force, so that peace with England might be secured and sealed before the anger of the conquered nations should be joined to the hatred of the conquered Kings.

Napoleon put off the garments of peace and of conciliation. He chose deliberately the part of a conqueror —that part which his enemies have ascribed to his "boundless" ambition. But never, perhaps, has conqueror gone forth so anxiously as he went forth or with so clear a knowledge of the improbability of ultimate success. Napoleon the Conqueror, in truth, was leaving personal ambition behind him. Had he been willing to do a deal

with the Kings and to sacrifice to their hatred the greatness of Revolutionary France, he could have obtained, at once, complete security for his throne and his House. The "kingdoms of this world" would have been his reward. In refusing that "deal" he staked everything which baser men value on "the issue of a single battle"; he condemned himself to unceasing labour and hardship; he turned his throne into the mere headquarters of an army. So long as he was successful baser men crowded about him, and praised him as a genius; in the hour of his failure, they fled away crying: "See how this fellow has overreached himself." It does not seem to have occurred to these men that Napoleon never failed of his real purpose—the establishment of the ideal of the French Revolution—Democracy—in the mind of Europe.

Because he chose in 1806 to sacrifice the safety of his crown and his House and to go crusading against the Kings and the War Lords, the spirit of the Revolution is dominant throughout the world at this present hour. The Retreat from Russia, Leipzig, even Waterloo, were on the cards from the beginning; Napoleon was never fool enough to suppose that victory belonged to him. His hope was set, not on the fruits of victory, but on the certain recompense of a faith which withheld nothing, neglected nothing, and made no compromise with its opponents.

Behold, then, the Man of the Revolution, the Emperor of the Common Folk, going forth in his grey riding-coat and his long boots, with the cockade of the French people in his hat, to the conquest, not of the Kings of Europe alone, but of ten centuries of oppression.

He may fail and be swept away; yet, because he has not shrunk from this unequal combat, the ideals which, in his own person, he upholds against a world in arms, are secure for ever.

## CHAPTER LV

### "WOMEN MUST WEEP"

FREDERICK WILLIAM'S marching men sent a thrill of joy through the hearts of the Kings. But before the Kings had time to hurry to Frederick William's help, Napoleon had struck him.

The Man was fortunate in that the army of Austerlitz was not yet disbanded. It remained on the frontiers of France and was ready for instant use. The moment the shouts of the Prussian War Lords began to challenge France, it received its orders. Napoleon, accompanied by Josephine, left Paris on September 25, 1806, in the big travelling carriage with the six Normandy horses. He reached Mayence three days later, having travelled at his usual terrific speed. At Mayence his Foot Guards, the Old Guard, were waiting for him. On October 1 he bade Josephine good-bye.

Josephine wept at that parting, for her mind was full of evil forebodings. The new Crusade was not at all to the liking of the new Empress, who would have preferred a secure throne and the friendship of the Kings. Moreover a terrible fear had begun to haunt the poor woman's mind—the fear of a divorce. Josephine could not for a moment forget the prophecy of the old negress of her girlhood days: "You will be Queen of France, but you will not die a Queen." Her enemies had already whispered in her ear that Napoleon owed to France the duty of marrying a woman who could bear him children.

Would this new campaign make a widow of her? If Napoleon returned from it victorious, as of old, would he listen to the advice of his mother and sisters and

ministers and make a fresh marriage? Josephine had never loved her husband; but she had grown to like him and to be proud of him. She had grown, too, to regard as her right the position which she occupied. The fires of jealousy, always smouldering in the heart of a frivolous woman, began to burn with fierce intensity.

And so, every night, in her palace at Mayence, this faded beauty sat down with a pack of cards and tried to "read" her future, while her daughter Hortense, the unhappy Queen of Holland, Louis' wife, and the gay Stephanie, her cousin, now the Princess of Baden, sat beside her remonstrating with her. The cards foretold the defeat of Napoleon at the hands of Frederick William, and Josephine wept. Then they foretold victory for Napoleon, and still Josephine wept. And then—so it is said—they foretold divorce and a new marriage for the Man of Battles. Josephine wept the more copiously.

Her tears, when he heard of them, filled Napoleon with distress.

"I cannot think why you weep," he wrote on October 5. "You do wrong to make yourself ill. . . . Pluck and a merry heart, that's the recipe."

One can almost see the hopelessness of Napoleon's expression as he sealed up that letter. When, in all her life, had Josephine ever taken his advice? When had she ever tried to encourage him? It may be that his thoughts turned with a sort of envy to his foe, Frederick William of Prussia, whose lovely young Queen was at that moment the virtual leader of the Prussian Army. Louise of Prussia, aged thirty, rode daily through the ranks, encouraging the soldiers and firing their enthusiasm. And her exquisite beauty was rendered all the more striking by the "uniform" she wore; a helmet of polished steel, shaded by a plume, a gleaming golden cuirass, a tunic of cloth of silver, red buskins with golden spurs. Joan of Arc herself was scarcely a more heroic figure.

The husbands of these two women, of the Empress with her tear-stained cards and the Queen with her shining armour, began to approach one another in the

neighbourhood of the village of Jena. Napoleon wrote to Josephine:

"*Oct.* 13, 1806, 2 *a.m.*—My dear, I am at Gera to-day. My affairs go excellently and everything as I could wish. With the aid of God they will, I believe, in a few days have taken a terrible course for the poor King of Prussia whom I am sorry for, personally, because he is a good man. The Queen is with the King. If she wants to see a battle she shall have that cruel pleasure. I am in splendid health. I have already put on flesh since my departure, yet I am doing, in person, twenty and twenty-five leagues a day on horseback, in my carriage, in all sorts of ways. I lie down at eight and get up at midnight. I fancy at times that you have not yet gone to bed. Yours ever,

"NAPOLEON."

At 2 a.m. on October 13, 1806, Napoleon was separated by only thirty hours from the Battle of Jena.

That day the eagle of France hovers from dawn till eve over his bewildered prey. When night falls there is a spectacle of strange and feverish activity on the precipitous slopes of the Landgrafenberg, the wooded hill across the valley from Jena. The Frenchmen are dragging their batteries of cannon up the slopes.

It is a task for giants rather than for men, and again and again the big guns stick in the hollow tracks. One of the guns has become immovable and is holding up all those below it, the soldiers curse the folly of their officers and of the leader who has set them this impossible work.

But see, a dim lantern approaches under the shadows of the tall trees. A quiver of excitement and wonder thrills these heroes of Marengo and Austerlitz.

"It is *he*."

Napoleon stands, lantern in hand, looking at the confusion. He speaks an order. He obeys it himself, throwing his weight against the resisting wheels. In an instant the impossible has been accomplished.

The lantern grows dim, a mere speck of light, like a glowworm in the misty darkness. But the soldiers work

on, now, with a new zeal. The spirit of the Man is upon them.

Napoleon has come to his bivouac on the summit of the Landgrafenberg. His officers await him; his Guard are stretched, asleep, round about him. There are orders to be given, dispositions to be made. Then he flings himself down on the straw which has been spread as his couch. . . . The fog moves like the ghosts of dead men among the pine trees.

And out of that fog, plucked from the hands of Fate, the victories of Jena and Auerstadt: the utter destruction of the armies of Frederick William. Jena was Napoleon's victory, Auerstadt—the greater victory of the two—belonged to Davoust, his Marshal, that "little smooth-pated, unpretending man, who was never tired of waltzing." In the official bulletins the Man put the emphasis on Jena, to hide from his enemies the fact that he had been misinformed about the position of the main Prussian Army, but in private Davoust had all the credit. When, thirteen days later, the French Army entered Berlin in triumph, Davoust and his men were the first to pass into the Royal City.

Let the reader mark that triumphal entry into Berlin —the first triumphal entry which Napoleon ever made. It is the Conqueror now, with whom Europe has to deal, and no longer the man who believes that he can afford to spare the feelings of the Kings.

Berlin is silent, shuttered. But there is wonder and curiosity, nevertheless, in the city and the streets are crowded. The Guard goes by, and then men see the splendid uniforms of the Marshals of France, of Davoust, Berthier, Augereau, Duroc. Only a glance for them, because among them is he, the master of them all, in his grey coat, with the hat of Jena pulled down over his brow, the hat with the ribbon of the Revolution for its sole ornament.

Napoleon looks neither to the right nor to the left. It is hateful this triumph of one nation over another, and Paoli's man feels the hatefulness of it so that he has to

remind himself that the Revolution is fighting for its life and that thus, only, can it be saved. He receives the keys of the city from its kneeling magistrates; he passes on to the palace of Frederick William and there promises order on the part of his soldiers and safety for the common folk.

"Your aristocracy," he declares, "is the sole author of all the misfortunes of Prussia. It is your aristocracy which has forced me to fight; I will punish it by forcing it to beg its bread in England."

A day or two later comes Talleyrand from Mayence, and Napoleon writes to Josephine again at 2 a.m.

"Talleyrand has just arrived and tells me, my dear, that you do nothing but cry. What on earth do you want? You have your daughter, your grand-children, and good news; surely these are sufficient reasons for being happy and contented. . . ."

There is no mention of Berlin. But the letter ends with a reference to Hortense's and Louis' little son:

"I have received a letter from M. Napoleon; I do not believe it is from him but from Hortense. Kindest regards to everybody."

Poor little M. Napoleon, he had then only a few weeks to live.

The Conqueror, it must be confessed, does not find that his new part sits very easily on him. He has written to Josephine telling her to have nothing to do with Madame Tallien, and she has rebuked him for that letter. He replies:

"Yours to hand, in which you seem annoyed at the bad things I say about women; it is true that I hate intriguing women more than anything. I am used to kind, gentle, persuasive women; these are the kind I like. If I have been spoilt it is not my fault but yours. Moreover you shall learn how kind I have been to one who showed herself sensible and good, Madame d'Hatzfeld (the wife of a Prussian noble who was giving away Napoleon's

[*Photo: Bulloz, Paris.*

NAPOLEON AT THE BATTLE OF JENA.
From the picture by Vernet at Versailles.

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secrets). When I showed her husband's letter to her she admitted to me, amid her sobs, with profound emotion and frankly: 'Ah! It is indeed his writing!' While she was reading, her voice went to my heart; it pained me. I said: 'Well, Madame, throw that letter on the fire, I shall then no longer have the power to punish your husband.' She burned the letter and seemed very happy. Her husband now feels at ease; two hours later he would have been a dead man. You see, then, how I like kind, frank, gentle women; but it is because such alone resemble you."

He is a curious spectacle, this would-be man of blood and iron, instantly carried away by a wife's love of her husband and then making almost passionate use of his own weakness to defend himself to his own wife. Napoleon did not love Josephine now as he had once loved her; other women had come into his life. But Josephine remained for him his ideal of womanhood, and he could not, for a moment, be indifferent to her criticisms. To read these latter-day letters to her is to realize that, if only she could have loved him whole-heartedly, his cup of happiness would have been full.

That is the more strange when Josephine's personality is realized.

"She is exactly like a ten-year-old child," wrote one of her ladies-in-waiting, "good-natured, frivolous, impressionable; in tears at one moment and comforted the next. She has just wit enough not to be an utter idiot. Ignorant—as are most Creoles—she has learned nothing or next to nothing, except by conversation; but having passed her life in good society, she has got good manners, grace, and a mastery of that sort of jargon which, in society, sometimes passes for wit. Social events constitute the canvas which she embroiders, which she arranges, and which give her a subject for conversation. She is witty for quite a whole quarter of an hour every day. . . . Her diffidence is charming . . . her temper very sweet and even; it is impossible not to be fond of her. I fear that this need of unbosoming or communicating all her thoughts and impressions, of telling all that passes between herself and

the Emperor, keeps the latter from taking her into his confidence. . . . She told me this morning that, during all the years she had spent with him, never once had she seen him let himself go."

And yet he could not forget her, and no other woman ever took her place—though one other woman, towards whom, unknown to himself, he was even now going, gave him that love which withholds nothing and which endureth all things. Perhaps Josephine gave more than she is usually credited with giving—not love, but a kind of mothering. Not the support of a wife, but the sweetness of a very intimate friend. I have sometimes thought that the exquisite care which Napoleon took of his wounded —to take but a single instance—may have been a tribute, indirect and scarcely realized, to Josephine's kindness of heart. After Jena, at any rate, as after Austerlitz, the Man of Blood and Iron carried his flask of brandy—constantly refilled—all over the stricken field all through the night "putting his hand to each unconscious soldier's breast and, when he found unexpected life, giving way to a joy impossible to describe."

Napoleon, in Berlin, had only begun his task. Frederick William of Prussia and the lovely Louise were fugitives, rushing for succour to Alexander of Russia who was marching with a great army to help them. Alexander remained to be dealt with, and England remained to be dealt with. Francis of Austria, too, was trying, very timidly, to put his finger in the pie.

The Man of the Revolution, seated in the palace of Frederick the Great, hurled a challenge to Britannia in the very language which King George was so fond of using himself. He declared that, from this time, every port in Europe under the control of France—and that meant all the ports of Germany and Denmark and Holland and Belgium and France and Italy—were closed to English ships.

This was the plan of "conquering the sea by the land." It was not the same plan as that which Mad Paul of Russia had invented and employed with such deadly effect.

Napoleon was not aiming at starving England; he was aiming at ruining her merchant princes, her "shopkeepers" (in Paoli's phrase), whom he rightly believed to be the chief support of her War Lords. Let the War Profiteers find war an unprofitable speculation and peace would be assured.

It has been said that Napoleon did not realize how successful Mad Paul's starvation plan had been; in other words, that this all-seeing eye had missed King George's proclamations to his people to tighten their belts and eat stale bread and stop distilling whisky. I do not believe it. These proclamations must have been well known to the Man of the Revolution and their meaning must have been well known. *But Napoleon had no wish to starve the English people whom he regarded as his friends;* it was the War Lords and the War Profiteers whom he desired to strike. He had learned that the English people were unable to prevail for any length of time against "their betters."

The "Berlin decrees," as they were called, were meant to make war for English merchants, a losing proposition. They were meant to strike at British finance and British commerce—two great roots of British hatred of the French Revolution. The English merchant class, who lived in continual terror of that large body of their fellow-countrymen whom they always spoke of as "the poor," understood this very well. Napoleon, as they understood him, was the Emperor of the poor and therefore the most dangerous man on earth. And here they joined the English aristocrats who looked on the Man as the Emperor of the Parvenues.

Said *The Times:*

"We wish to see the Bourbons back; we wish to have to fight with gentlemen and men of honour, not with vagabonds."

The Emperor of the Vagabonds never, in his whole life, directed any measure specially against "the poor." I have little doubt that he refrained from a plan of starvation, which he could easily have carried out, simply

because he preferred, like *The Times*, though for a different reason, to make war on "gentlemen and men of honour."

"Napoleon Bonaparte, sir," as the Duke of Wellington rightly said, "was no gentleman."

Having dealt with the "shopkeepers" the Man turned to meet Alexander, "The Autocrat of Waltzes and of War," as Byron called him; and to meet, also, though he knew it not, the lovely Marie Walewski, the woman who was destined really to love him.

Josephine had the news of this march, on which every eye in Europe was fixed, and at the spectacle of which—so daring was it—friend and foe alike held their breath.

"*November* 29, 1806, *noon*.—I am at Posen, capital of Great Poland. . . . My troops are at the gates of Warsaw."

Josephine took a sudden desire to follow the army to this capital of pretty women.

"*December* 3, 1806, 6 *p.m.*—I am hoping to send for you in a few days; that is, if circumstances will permit. The warmth of your letter makes me realize that you, like other pretty women, know no bounds. What you will must be; but, as for me, I declare that, of all men, I am the greatest slave, my master has no pity and this master is the nature of things."

The immemorial reply of man to woman! But see how carefully he watches her interest in him:

"*Posen, December* 10, 1806, 5 *p.m.*—An officer has just brought me a rug, a gift from you; it is somewhat short and narrow, but I thank you for it none the less. . . . My affairs prosper pretty well. . . ."

Alas, Josephine, why did not you buy the biggest and richest rug you could obtain? And why did not you write a letter with your gift?

"*Posen, December* 12, 1806, 7 *p.m.*—My dear, I have not received any letter from you. . . . I have made peace with Saxony. The Elector is King and one of the confederation" (the Ring of Friendship).

It was Josephine now who wanted to come to Napoleon. But the Man is too busy. The Russians are retreating before him and the Poles, devoured by the Kings even as the Revolution would have been devoured but for Napoleon, are crowding around him, begging him to save them as he has saved Italy. He has his army to take into winter quarters; he has fortresses still to capture; he has Alexander and Frederick William and Queen Louise to watch; he has newly-conquered Prussia to control; he has Germany and France and Holland and Italy to govern; he has the "shopkeepers" to cure of their love of war. The whole world is at his door; the hopes of millions of men are fixed upon him. And it is New Year's Eve. On the morrow Love will come to him with all her richness and her glory.

On New Year's Eve, 1807, the nobles of Poland gave a great ball in honour of the man who had already driven from their land the Russian bear and the Prussian wolf —Alexander and Frederick William. The ballroom was full of "gay uniforms and great names." A door opened at the end of the room and a severely-clad figure entered in dead silence.

The usher announced, "The Emperor."

At that moment Marie Walewski, a lovely girl married to a bad-tempered man fifty years older than herself, felt her heart almost stop. A few minutes later she was being presented to Napoleon, who had remarked her as swiftly as she had remarked him. Their eyes met. The newly-kindled love of the woman went out like a benediction to the man who had not yet known disinterested love.

"One might say," cried Napoleon in recalling that hour, "that her soul was as beautiful as her face. She was an angel."

He could not see too much of her, and all the evening his eyes followed her golden head. He noted the slight shadow of melancholy on her features and expressed the belief that she was unhappy. And that idea filled him with dismay. He would rescue her; he would love her.

They would be all things to each other, he and she, whom, at first sight, love had made one.

Imagine the scene! The Conqueror of Europe conquered in his triumphant march. The all-enduring and always despised husband of Josephine become, in an instant, the real lord of a woman's heart—and she a girl of twenty-two, the loveliest of the lovely. The Man of Destiny with the knowledge of a destiny still more glorious and more wonderful breaking in on his mind.

"The day after the ball," says his valet, "the Emperor seemed to me in an unusually agitated state. He walked about the room, sat down, got up and walked about again. Immediately after luncheon he sent a great person to visit Madame Walewski for him."

The "great person" carried this letter:

"I have seen only you, I have admired only you, I desire only you. A very prompt answer to calm the impatient ardour of N."

Marie rushed to her lover with the recklessness of a love that, eight years later, was to make her beg to be allowed to share with him his barren Atlantic rock. Napoleon was waiting for her, almost mad with impatience and emotion.

"Every moment he inquired the time. Madame Walewski arrived at last, but in what a state—pale, dumb, her eyes bathed in tears."

She told him all her troubles, the harshness of her elderly spouse, the misery of her life; and then she told him of the love that had stricken her like a sword; of the love which she, a woman of Poland, bore to her country. She was as chaste as ice and she cried bitterly all the time, because of the emotions which overwhelmed her and drove her she knew not where. Napoleon was moved to the depths of his being—as not even Josephine had ever moved him:

"Have I displeased you?" he wrote next morning. "I have still the right to hope the contrary. Have I been mistaken? Your eagerness diminishes while mine

augments. You take away my rest! Oh, give a little joy, a little happiness to a poor heart all ready to worship you. It is so difficult to get a reply. You owe me one.

"N."

And then again:

"There are moments when too high rank is a burden, and that is what I feel. How can I satisfy the needs of a heart hopelessly in love, which would fling itself at your feet and which finds itself stopped by the weight of lofty considerations paralysing the most lofty desires. Oh, if you would! Only you could remove the obstacles that lie between us. My noble friend, Duroc, will clear the way. Oh! come! come! All your wishes shall be gratified. Your native land will be dearer to me when you have had pity on my poor heart.

"N."

Marie came again, and again filled the night with her weeping. Did the cards of Josephine, weeping also at Mayence on those nights, reveal the truth? It may be so, for Napoleon wrote to her on January 16:

"I have received your letter of January 5; all that you tell me of your unhappiness pains me. Why these tears, these repinings?"

The husband in him, insulted, abused, betrayed, disgraced, is still very strong. This "Man of Blood and Iron" cannot bear to hurt Josephine's feelings even at a moment when he is utterly carried away by Marie. He begs her not to come to Poland; he orders her to go to Paris. But he consoles her with the assurances of his affection.

"Never doubt my feelings . . . I love you much . . . an Empress ought to have fortitude. . . ."

Few men would have written her a line in such circumstances. But Napoleon was quite sincere. His love for Josephine was, now, very like the regard of a son—just as her attitude to him was almost maternal.

Marie gave herself to love, telling herself that it was for Poland's sake that she did so. A new world was revealed to Napoleon.

"Marie, my sweet Marie," he wrote, "my first thought is for you, my first desire to see you again. You will come again, will you not? You promised me to do so. If not, the eagle will fly to you. I shall see you at dinner, a friend tells me. Deign then to accept this bouquet; let it become a mysterious link which shall establish between us a secret union in the midst of the court surrounding us. Exposed to the glances of the crowd we shall still understand each other. When my hand presses my heart you will know that it is full of thoughts of you; and in answer you will press closer your bouquet. Love me, my bonny Marie, and never let your hand leave your bouquet.

"N."

But the drums are rolling again, even in this January weather. The Man of Battles springs to the saddle and rides away from his Marie to lead his soldiers on to the dreadful field of Eylau where the Russian Army and the remains of the Prussian Army are offering to give him battle. This combat of Eylau is no spear-thrust such as Marengo or Austerlitz, but a slow, remorseless slaughter lasting from winter dawn to winter eve.

Napoleon, during the battle, stands in a cemetery with his staff. The Russian grenadiers fight like tigers and, once, they break through the French lines and come to the cemetery gates. Napoleon's staff glance about them anxiously, and the horses are called up. But the Man makes no sign. He lowers his field telescope and watches the oncoming mass of his foes with parted lips and heightened colour:

"What boldness!"

Then he makes a signal to his Old Guard. The cemetery is cleared at the point of the bayonet. Night comes across the red fields. Can any man say which side has won the battle? But in the morning the Russians and the Prussians have vanished away.

"Yesterday," wrote Napoleon to Josephine, on February 8, 1807, at 3 a.m., "there was a great battle; the victory has remained with me but I have lost many men."

And again on the 14th :

"I am still at Eylau. This country is covered with dead and wounded. It is not the bright side of warfare; one suffers and the mind is oppressed at the sight of so many victims. . . . You are sure to be uneasy and that thought troubles me. . . ."

The " Man of Blood and Iron " cannot bear the thought of this slaughter of Eylau, and all his letters are full of his distress. Eight days were needed to bury the dead and remove the wounded. Napoleon's whole time was given up now to seeing that the wounded received proper care, " and he insisted on the Russians being as well treated as the French." He wrote :

" If more surgeons had been on the spot I could have saved at least two hundred lives. . . . On no account begrudge money for medicines and especially for quinine."

It is small wonder that Napoleon was so deeply affected. In a space three miles square, on the snow and frozen lakes of Eylau, there were heaped 10,000 dead men and 4,000 dead horses. Of these dead men about 6,000 were Russians. For a fortnight after this battle Napoleon did not once take his boots off and his staff never even undressed. Potatoes were the Conqueror's chief article of diet. Yet, all the while, he was governing Europe almost as though he had been sitting on his green sofa in the palace of the Tuileries.

He had not meant to make peace with Frederick William, but now he sent a verbal message to that unfortunate King offering to treat with him separately from Alexander. He renewed that message a week later. But Frederick William and Alexander were resolved to fight on together. Napoleon betook himself, for the remainder of the winter, to the Castle of Finckenstein, and to Marie.

Marie, " my bonny Marie," had now left her seventy-year-old husband for ever. She belonged, body and soul, to the man of her heart. And from this time Napoleon's letters to Josephine are concerned chiefly with the weather,

with furniture ("I have several fireplaces which is a great comfort to me; getting up often in the night I like to see the fire"), and with family matters, notably the love affairs of Caroline and the health of Louis' and Hortense's little son Napoleon ("I hope that he has been vaccinated"), who died on May 5, at the Hague, of diphtheria.

[*Photo: Bulloz, Paris.*

NAPOLEON AT THE BATTLE OF EYLAU.
From the picture by Gros at the Louvre.

## CHAPTER LVI

### A ROSE FOR A QUEEN

These days at Finckenstein were days of love and days of anxiety. For Francis of Austria was once again buckling on his armour. The Austrian Army was being increased and it was possible for Austria to strike Napoleon in the back—just as a year before, at Austerlitz, it had been possible for Prussia to do so.

Would Francis dare to strike? Napoleon did not think so. But when he heard that Francis was ready to act as "peacemaker" between himself and England his anxiety increased. He knew that offer and he knew what it meant. King George evidently was at his old work of Ring-making. Napoleon had no illusions. He and his army were in a dangerous position. They had the huge army of Alexander of Russia in front of them, ready to fight as soon as the snow melted. They had Francis of Austria on their right-hand side. They had beaten, but furious, Prussia behind them. And they were 1,000 miles from home. In addition, English troops and Swedish troops had been landed in the north of Germany and might try to cut the life-lines connecting the army with France. . . .

But the Man did not despair; he did not think of turning back. If he could strike Alexander down his troubles would vanish, for then Francis would be cowed and England, unable to build up any other Ring, and afraid of losing her trade with Europe, would surely make peace—such a peace as would allow him to bring all his armies home to France and, at last, give to his people the ripe blessings of the Revolution.

Napoleon dwelt on that prospect to the exclusion of all others. If only he could obtain a real, lasting peace with England he could set about creating the France of his dreams : such a land as the world had never yet known. But England, would England make peace with him, with the Revolution, of which he was the sign and the symbol ?

Napoleon discussed these difficulties with Marie Walewski and for the first time in his life received the help of a woman who asked nothing except his welfare and his happiness. But Marie was a Pole, and her eager young heart was stricken with sorrow for her country which, like ravening wolves, Russia and Prussia and Austria had torn in pieces and devoured. To the love of a woman was added the glowing admiration of a patriot. This man of hers, of Latin blood like herself, had humbled in the dust the merciless and unscrupulous enemies of her country, the very Kings whose false ancestors had lured Poland, noble and unsuspecting, to a horrible and bloody fate. Marie urged on her lover that he should raise up Poland again and deliver her from the hands which oppressed.

" You are the saviour of Italy ; be the saviour of Poland also."

Her ideas exactly fitted Napoleon's ideas. But here, as in Italy, salvation could come only by degrees. It would be easy, for example, Napoleon said, to set free that portion of Poland which had been seized by Prussia—for Prussia was humbled in the dust. It would not be so easy to set free the portions of Poland which belonged to Russia and Austria. For the Russian Army was as yet unbeaten and the Austrian Army was growing stronger every day. He could do only what he could do.

Nevertheless the Man of the Revolution told this Polish girl that he meant to make a beginning of recreating her country, cost him what it might. Poland, which is a blood-relation of France, should stand as an outpost of the French Revolution in the very heart of the enemy's country.

With that promise on his lips, Napoleon went into battle once more, against the army of Alexander of Russia. Everything was staked on this mighty throw and the Man

knew it. He was surrounded by enemies on every side and there were enemies for hundreds of miles behind him—between his army and France. Let him make but a single false step and instantly those who to-day bowed the knee would spring to arms. The Kings would destroy him and the Revolution with him.

The eyes of the Kings gloated on Napoleon's isolation. Now, they told themselves, he has overreached himself. Now he has only to slip and we have him. Francis of Austria and King George and even poor, humbled Frederick William gasped with hope and hate. . . .

And into those gasping, gloating faces Napoleon, on the anniversary of Marengo, hurled yet another victory, the destruction, in a single day, of Alexander's army and of the remnant of Frederick William's army. The dreadful name of Friedland came ringing in the ears of the Kings. Alexander of Russia was beaten just as Frederick William of Prussia had been beaten, just as Francis of Austria had been beaten. Russia lay open to Napoleon; and even England began to doubt of the future.

Alexander of Russia at once proposed that peace should be made. Napoleon accepted his proposals and agreed to meet him at Tilsit on a raft moored in the middle of the River Niemen which separated the French and the beaten remnant of the Russian Army.

That meeting is the strangest in all history. The Man of the Revolution reached the raft, which had a cabin at one end, at the same moment as the mighty young Lord of all the Russias. He sprang aboard and strode forward alone, towards the tall figure which, until this moment, he had never seen. Alexander, smiling and gracious, instantly offered the embrace of Kings. That much the hundreds of spectators on both banks of the river saw clearly and applauded to the skies. Then Conqueror and Conquered disappeared into the cabin of the raft.

To this hour no man knows for certain what they said to each other. But this much is known: in the cabin of the raft Napoleon offered Alexander peace and friendship on condition that Russia would join with France in trying

to persuade England to end the war. Alexander was to be the peacemaker between the French Revolution and the Kings.

But the Man of the Revolution was determined not again to be played with. Until peace was obtained he meant to keep his soldiers in Prussia. And if England refused to make peace he demanded that Alexander should declare war on England and join him in calling on Denmark and Sweden and Portugal—lands of the sea—to declare war also. The handsome young Emperor of Russia agreed to all these stipulations. He said that he had grown to hate England because, though King George had made great promises of help to the other Kings, he had sent them no help except money. While the Kings of Europe had been fighting Napoleon, King George had been seizing all the colonies of all the nations.

As he spoke Alexander's face grew troubled. Sincerity seemed to beam from his eyes. Napoleon's grey eyes watched him for a while and then the conversation began to turn on the advantages which peace with France would bring to Russia. Alexander could scarcely believe his ears so exactly did his new friend read the secret desires of his heart. They parted promising to meet again the next day. A shade crossed Alexander's face.

"I have the King of Prussia with me," he said, as though he remembered the skeleton in the cupboard.

"Bring him to-morrow."

And so, on the next day, Napoleon met Frederick William as well as Alexander on the raft. Poor Frederick William, there was no glowing prospect for him. Napoleon spoke plainly :

"I offered you friendship," he declared, "and you accepted it. Then you betrayed my friendship and made sudden war on me. I am going to put it beyond your power to renew that war. Only the fact that the Emperor Alexander of Russia has asked me, as a favour, to spare you, prevents me from disposing of your kingdom altogether."

Napoleon then announced that he meant to set free

from Prussia's rule that part of Poland which had been seized by her, that he meant to take back Hanover, and that a new kingdom would be made for his brother Jerome between Prussia and France.

Frederick William went away in deepest dejection to break this terrible news to his beautiful young Queen who now spent her days and nights in weeping. Alexander and Napoleon continued their discussion alone. That evening Alexander and Frederick William crossed the river and came to live on the opposite bank beside Napoleon, in the village of Tilsit. A lovely Arab horse was waiting for Alexander, and mounted on this, he inspected that famous "Old Guard" which had triumphed for Napoleon in so many battles. Then he and Frederick William and Napoleon dined together at Napoleon's house. When dinner was over Frederick William departed to his own lodgings.

It was agreed between Alexander and Napoleon that, while their new friendship should immediately be made known to the world their intention to call the sea-lands, Sweden and Denmark and Portugal, to join them should be kept secret. For, if England knew of that intention and did not mean to make peace, she would certainly compel these sea-lands, the gateways of the Baltic and the Mediterranean, to join with her.

*England learned that secret, however, as quickly as galloping horses and swift-sailing ships could carry it to her.*

She learned it so swiftly that the news must have been sent off from Tilsit on the very day on which Alexander and Napoleon met *for the first time* in the cabin of the raft: June 25, 1807. That is to say, it must have been betrayed, on that first evening, either by Alexander or by Napoleon—for it is absurd to think that any spy was hidden on that small raft. Napoleon certainly did not betray a piece of news which would have the effect of ruining all his plans. What about Alexander?

This strange young man, when he promised Napoleon to insist on the help of the sea-lands, Sweden and Denmark and Portugal, against England, was going back on a

promise which he had made only three weeks before to England herself. At the beginning of this very month of June Alexander and Frederick William had agreed with King George to force the sea-land, Denmark, to join the Kings against Napoleon. There were Englishmen, consequently, with Alexander's army, at his headquarters, and *one of them is known to have started for home on the very night of the meeting on the raft.*

After all, why should Alexander keep faith with Napoleon ? Alexander was a King, Napoleon only a common man. The blue blood in Alexander's veins must have boiled at the thought that this common man had beaten all the armies of the Kings, even his own great Russian Army. Twice over, at Austerlitz and now at Friedland, Alexander had been compelled to beat hasty and undignified retreats before the soldiers of a fellow who was not even a gentleman. It had been necessary to make peace with Napoleon. There was no help for that. It was necessary, too, to do what Napoleon demanded. And there was no sense in not getting as much as possible out of the little French soldier—one may as well make the best of a bad job. But to expect a King really and truly to help a common man against other Kings ! Just a hint to King George and everything would be explained—King George would understand that he, Alexander, was not really dirtying his hands by clasping those of Bonaparte. He was only stooping to conquer, to gain time. If he were compelled to act and talk like an enemy of the Kings he was not really an enemy at heart. Blue blood was thicker than the waters of the River Niemen.

Alexander must have told Napoleon's secret, since there was no one else to tell it. It is possible that he did not tell it directly to any Englishman ; but, as I have said, he knew that there was at least one Englishman at headquarters, messing with his principal General. All he had to do was to tell his General what had happened—though he had, of course, promised Napoleon to tell nobody what had happened.

In any case England had the news by July 21—that is

to say, at the very earliest possible moment. It was, perhaps, the most terrible news which a British Foreign Minister has ever received. For it meant that, very soon, if the sea-lands, and especially Denmark, should join Napoleon the Baltic Sea would be shut to English ships. And that meant, very likely, starvation in England, unless Napoleon should choose to allow the wheat of the Baltic lands to be sent out. England was back again, it seemed, in the days of Mad Paul, the days of bread-rations and of hunger, the days in which peace with Napoleon had been so absolutely necessary that not even the War Lords had dared to oppose it.

What was to be done? Canning had no hesitation and no doubt at a moment when every friend of England in Europe was full of both. England's friends said that now she would be compelled to make peace—since not even the English War Lords could make war against Napoleon and Alexander of Russia combined. The English War Lords, thanks to that little hint from the raft at Tilsit, knew better. There was no question of making war against Napoleon and Alexander combined; only let the Baltic be kept open, and, as soon as Napoleon had gone back to Paris, Alexander would do his best . . . not openly, of course, but in other ways.

And so on the day after the hint from the raft arrived, Canning wrote a "most secret" despatch to his agent in Denmark:

"Foreign Office.

"SIR,—Intelligence reached me yesterday directly from Tilsit, that at an interview which took place between the Emperor of Russia and Bonaparte on the 24th or 25th of last month, the latter brought forward a proposal for a maritime league against Great Britain, to which the accession of Denmark was represented by Bonaparte to be as certain as it was essential. The *Emperor of Russia is described as having neither accepted nor refused this proposal.* . . .

"But the confidence with which Bonaparte spoke of the accession of Denmark to such a league, coupled with other

circumstances and particulars of intelligence which have reached this country, makes it absolutely necessary that His Majesty should receive from the Court of Denmark some distinct and satisfactory assurances either that no such proposition has been made to that Court by France or that, having been made, it has been rejected, and some *sufficient security* that, if made or repeated, it will meet with the same reception. . . ."

The " sufficient security " was nothing less than the Danish fleet. England actually demanded from the Prince Royal of Denmark that he should, at once, give up all his ships to her so as to make sure that these ships would not be used to bar the door of the Baltic Sea.

It was an astounding demand, because England was at peace with Denmark and had no right of any sort to interfere with her. Yet the necessity was far too urgent to allow of delay or scruple. If the Baltic Sea were to be closed the War Lords of England—no matter what Alexander might do—would be compelled to make peace with the French Revolution. Hunger would compel them. If the Baltic Sea could be kept open, everything might be hoped for from Alexander of Russia—once Napoleon went home and the ships of England came sailing up to the Russian ports.

Necessity, where War Lords are concerned, knows no law. The Prince Royal of Denmark, who had no love for England, flatly refused to give up his ships ; he was told that in that case his good city of Copenhagen would be destroyed by the guns of England. He protested in vain that he was doing nothing against England, and that his ships were not even ready for sea. He asked what right England had to attack a friendly nation during a time of peace. He said that surely the great people of England would not fire with cannon on a defenceless and unoffending city full of women and children. All to no purpose. The bombardment of Copenhagen began on September 2. The scenes which followed can be guessed from the official report which states :

" For the last two days the conflagration has been

very considerable, and at this moment rages with great violence."

On September 5 the Danes could stand no more. They hauled down their flag, surrendered Copenhagen to the English War Lords, and handed over their fleet which was promptly made ready for sea—it had not, as the Danes truly stated, been ready for sea—and taken away to England.

I confess that I find it difficult to understand how men who acted in this lawless and piratical way dared to blame Napoleon for anything which he ever did. The bombardment of Copenhagen made peace between England and France absolutely impossible. It may be said that this was just as well and that, by hook or crook, we had to fight Napoleon to the death since he and England could not live together in the same world. I do not believe that for a moment. The truth, which was spoken at this time, by an honest Englishman, Whitbread, a disciple of Fox, is entirely different. Whitbread declared :

"Formidable, indeed, is France, but what has laid kings prostrate at her feet and what has ranged the population of nations under her banner ? The infatuated policy of England during the last fifteen years. . . . We talk of the machinations, the artifices and the intrigues of Bonaparte ; they all resolve themselves into four great battles. . . . You made it necessary for him to fight these battles ; you combined the world against him ; he has conquered the world combined and he has combined the world against you."

The *Edinburgh Review* said :

"The wars which her neighbours have waged against France have been the sole cause of her greatness."

It is to the lasting honour of the Whigs that they condemned utterly the bombardment of Copenhagen ; but there is just this to be said for Canning. Thanks to the hatred of the War Lords against Napoleon and the Revolution, the time was fast passing away when peace—real peace—could have been made. The War Lords had

brought England to such a state that she was almost forced to act dishonourably in order to live. There was, at that time, no honour among the Kings.

Napoleon, even before he left Tilsit and bade good-bye to Alexander, began to realize this. The Man did not know as yet about the hint from the raft which was, even then, being carried into England for his undoing. But he began to "get the measure" of young Alexander. He began to see that, not for a single instant, could Alexander forget either the blue blood in his veins or the blood of his murdered father which rumour said was on his hands. Alexander's vanity was big enough to devour the world; his sense of guilt was big enough to devour him. He wanted conquests as great as Napoleon's and yet at the same time he wanted to be seen of men as the lover of humanity, the generous, good, warm-hearted young man.

That was why he was so eager to seize Finland from his brother-in-law the King of Sweden and to snatch at the possessions of the Sultan of Turkey. And that was why he hated Napoleon's plan for raising up the Poles again and helping them to recover their lost freedom—as Napoleon had promised Marie should be done. That, also, was why he pretended to take such a beautiful and kindly interest in poor Frederick William and his bonny, weeping Queen. Alexander, where Queen Louise was concerned, was gallantry itself. He promised her that he would use all his influence with Napoleon to get back for her husband his lost kingdom, and then, once he and Napoleon were alone together, he forgot all about his promises, and never even mentioned them. There was too much that he wanted to ask for himself. When the lovely Louise began to press for some result, the false young man referred her to Napoleon. Napoleon asked her to dinner. She dried her tears and came to that unwelcome feast. The Man of the Revolution was charming to her. But he had not forgotten the steel helmet and the golden cuirass of the days before the Battle of Jena. Even the tear-stained cheeks of a pretty woman could not dispel that memory.

And so, instead of the lands for which she asked, he

[*Photo: Bulloz, Paris.*

NAPOLEON AND THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.
From the picture by Gosse at Versailles.

gave her only a beautiful rose. And afterwards he wrote to Josephine :

" Yesterday the Queen of Prussia dined with me. I had to be on the defence against some further concessions she wished me to make to her husband ; but I was very polite and yet held firmly to my policy. She is very charming."

## CHAPTER LVII

### DEVIL AND DEEP SEA

The news of England's bombardment of Copenhagen and the seizing of the Danish fleet struck Napoleon like a blow. In that hour—he was home again, at Fontainebleau, resting—he knew that he might give up for ever hope of peace with England. It came, therefore, as no surprise to him that Alexander's efforts as peacemaker between himself and King George failed at the first attempt. Nor was he surprised to learn, as time went on, that Alexander's minister in London had not been recalled from that city, though the two countries were supposed to be at war. The Kings, he could see, were playing their ancient game against him. When he defeated them and forced them to join him, they still held secret intercourse with one another. Blue blood would never forgive him . . . because it would never forgive the Revolution.

I think that Napoleon realized at this time that, for him, there could be neither rest nor peace any more in the world. Unless he went on fighting, he, and the Revolution, would be destroyed. And yet, however successful he might be for a time, he could scarcely hope to triumph for ever against the enormous odds opposed to him.

There was but one hope left: the defeat of England. He had failed to shut the Baltic Sea to England. Could he manage to shut the Mediterranean and so prevent her from seizing Egypt and restoring her trade by selling her goods to the Mediterranean peoples? Every harbour which he possessed or over which he exercised influence was now shut to English ships. But Portugal was still open and so also were the harbours of the Pope in Italy.

And through these open harbours, like water through a hole in a dyke, English goods poured into Europe and were carried to all lands. That must be stopped, so that the English merchants might be changed from War Profiteers into Peacemakers. If possible, too, the narrow straits of Gibraltar must be closed to England's ships.

Napoleon called this system of shutting harbours against English ships the "Continental System." England, as he soon learned, had a terrible reply to it—the "Continental Blockade." England ordered that no ship of any nation should be allowed to sail the seas unless it had been searched by her officers and unless it had called first at an English port and paid a heavy tax. Ships which had not paid or which refused to be searched were to be captured and made prizes. Britannia, in other words, declared that not only did she rule the waves, the waves actually belonged to her. Nobody might use them without paying for the privilege of doing so and without first obtaining her consent to use them. That meant that no foreign country could get any overseas goods or could send its own goods overseas. Trade, except such trade as Britannia chose to allow, was at a standstill—for the British Navy was everywhere and there was nothing to stand against it.

Europe was now in the position of the middle-aged man who had two wives—a young wife and an old one. The young wife pulled out all the grey hairs and the old wife pulled out all the hairs which were not grey. Napoleon would not allow English goods to come to Europe; England retaliated by refusing to allow any other goods to come.

The result was that, though the English merchants suffered severely, the merchants of Europe suffered much more. They could neither buy nor sell outside of the continent. And the merchants of Russia looked like suffering most of all because England was the chief buyer of their timber and their wheat. Happily for them England needed their wheat and Napoleon had not ordered them not to send it to England. But they needed English

goods, and Napoleon had ordered them not to receive any goods from England. It was here that Alexander's double dealing between Napoleon and Britannia came in so useful.

Napoleon began to see that, while his great Trade Plan might bring England to her knees in the long run, before that happened half the countries in Europe would be ruined and would, consequently, be in revolt against him. So he quickened the pace of this fierce conflict by ordering the seizing and destruction of all English merchandise found in any of his own or his allies' harbours.

Meanwhile his gaze had already—even before Copenhagen—fallen on Portugal, that second sea-land which he and Alexander had agreed should be called on to close its harbours to the English. His gaze fell also on Spain, the way to Gibraltar. Portugal was England's oldest and most faithful ally. Spain was supposed to be a friend of France. *But this friend, during the last campaign in Prussia, had actually made ready an army to stab France in the back if she should be defeated.*

Napoleon determined to bring both Portugal and Spain into his new plan. He meant to capture Gibraltar with the help of the Spaniards—who had for long resented the presence of the English on this Spanish rock—and so to shut the Mediterranean to English ships. Then he would turn and, with the help of outraged Denmark, shut the Baltic sea also. There would remain not a single harbour in the whole of Europe into which an English vessel would dare to enter—and that, certainly, would mean ruin for England's merchants and so peace with England.

Portugal was summoned to lend France the help of her fleet, to shut her harbours against England, and to seize all the goods belonging to Englishmen in these harbours. The Royal Family of Portugal was now in a truly terrible position. For there were English warships in the Tagus; and could Lisbon expect better treatment than Copenhagen had received? The guns which had bombarded Copenhagen would certainly be turned on Lisbon also if English goods were taken. On the other hand, *there was*

*Napoleon*. . . . This was a true case of being between the Devil and the Deep Sea.

Napoleon, the devil, was so terrifying that the Prince Regent of Portugal very nearly gave way. But, as he faltered, the threats of the Deep Sea resounded in his ears. As Dr. Holland Rose says :

" Very much depended on the action of the Prince Regent of Portugal. Had he tamely submitted to Napoleon's ukase and placed his fleet, and his vast colonial empire, at the service of France it is doubtful whether even the high-souled Canning would not have stooped to surrender in face of odds so overwhelming."

Lord Strangford, the British Minister at Lisbon, who was the mouthpiece of Britannia, wrote to Canning that :

" The Portuguese Ministers place all their hopes of being able to ward off this terrible blow [Napoleon's] in the certainty which they entertain of England being obliged to enter into negotiations for a general peace. . . . The very existence of the Portuguese Monarchy depends on the celerity with which England shall meet the pacific interference of the Emperor of Russia."

We have seen with what " celerity " Alexander's peace-making was met—and sent packing. The Prince Regent of Portugal refused to seize British goods—thus hearkening to the voice of the Deep Sea. Napoleon at once launched his army against him—it was commanded by Junot—and within a few weeks Portugal was conquered. The Royal Family of Portugal fled away to Brazil escorted by English ships, and the Portuguese Navy fell into the hands of England. The lesson of Copenhagen had not been lost. Nevertheless England was dislodged from one of her most cherished haunts.

That news, when it reached London, filled the War Lords and the Merchants with consternation. Better a dozen victories of Napoleon over the Kings of Europe than this victory. England resolved to send an army into Portugal without a moment's delay.

I would like the reader to take special note of this fact. For up till this time, though England had promised many armies to the Kings, she had sent scarcely a battalion. Up till this time, when Napoleon's legions were marching to victory across every frontier, England's best general, Wellington, was kept in India " mopping up " that great continent for the John Company. But Portugal was a very different proposition from Austria and Prussia. Portugal was a sea-land, an outer gateway of the Mediterranean, a most valuable means for getting English goods into Europe. Portugal must be defended.

Napoleon had called on his ally Spain to help him to conquer Portugal. Meanwhile very strange events had been going forward in Spain itself. The King of Spain, Charles IV, was half-witted. The Queen of Spain had a lover, Emmanuel Godoy, called " The Prince of the Peace," who ruled the country. She had also a son, Ferdinand, a worthless fellow who detested—not without reason—both his father and his mother but who—with excellent reason—detested Godoy much more than either father or mother. Ferdinand had already " had a shot " at seizing the crown for himself, but this shot of his had miscarried and the prodigal son was now in deep disgrace, subject to the imbecile rage of his father, the steady hatred of his mother, and the violent, cowardly spite of his mother's paramour, Godoy.

It was Godoy who had planned the scheme for striking Napoleon in the back during his last campaign. But now that victory had once more come to the Man of the Revolution, Godoy was full of flatteries and of fondness. He was not, however, full of activity; and he was utterly loathed and detested by the Spanish people.

Napoleon decided that nothing whatever could be done with this miserable gang of rulers—a half-witted man, a violent woman, and an insolent and treacherous paramour. He resolved to fill Spain with his own troops in order to secure that—happen what might—she would assist him in his designs. He did this at the direct request of the half-witted King—who was terrified of his own son,

Ferdinand, and who had begged the Man of the Revolution to protect him against his own son. The Spanish people, too, welcomed the French soldiers as saviours, believing that they had come to put an end to the disgraceful and scandalous " reign " of Godoy.

Excitement boiled up and boiled over, and Godoy began to fear for his life. He advised the King and Queen to escape from the country, and he meant to escape with them. But his advice came too late. A furious mob broke into his house and hunted him like a dog. Poor half-witted Charles was forced to abdicate and prodigal son Ferdinand was proclaimed King in his stead.

And meanwhile Murat, Napoleon's great cavalry leader, the husband of Caroline Bonaparte, had arrived in Madrid at the head of a French army, and to the accompaniment of the cheers and blessings of the Spaniards, who felt that, at last, thanks in great measure to these Frenchmen, they had got rid of the vile Godoy and had obtained a " respectable Prince " as their King. Napoleon had no very great opinion of this prodigal son and he determined not, in the meantime, to commit himself. He told Murat to stay where he was and not on any account to acknowledge Ferdinand as King.

Meanwhile Ferdinand the Prodigal had written a private letter to Napoleon telling him that his father had ceased to reign and that his own, Ferdinand's, reign had begun, and asking for the hand of a Bonaparte princess in marriage. Poor old feeble-minded Charles had written too, complaining bitterly of his wicked son, who had pulled the crown from his head, and begging the Man to come to Spain and set him back again on his throne.

Napoleon, who was on his way to Italy to deal with the Pope and to see his brother Lucien, gave long and deep consideration to these letters. It was absolutely essential to his plan of subduing England that he should possess a strong and capable and, above all, a trustworthy friend in the King of Spain. Already Godoy had betrayed his friendship (and Godoy meant the Queen and poor King Charles). Could he trust Fedinand the Prodigal, even

if Ferdinand became the husband of, say, Lucien's daughter ?

The Spanish Royal Family was Bourbon, of the same blood as the old Kings of France. It was French, not Spanish ; and it had been placed on the throne of Spain, a century before, by Louis XIV, the Great King, the builder of Versailles, in order to support France against England. Would any prince of the House of Bourbon remain true to that Revolution which had ruined the House of Bourbon ? The King of Naples, a brother of half-witted Charles of Spain, had already played false to his promise to France and, for playing false, had been driven from his throne.

Napoleon laid these facts before Lucien, when they met in Mantua. It was years since these two brothers had had any dealings with each other, for Lucien had not forgiven Napoleon for not making more fuss about him, and Napoleon was angry with Lucien for having married, as his second wife, a divorced woman with a doubtful reputation, who had, notoriously, been his mistress before marriage.

" How can I do anything for you," the Man demanded, " while you remain the husband of this woman ? "

Lucien said that his choice of a wife was his own affair, and told Napoleon, in so many words, to go to the devil. But he wanted, nevertheless, to possess a kingdom, like Joseph (the King of Naples) and Louis (the King of Holland) and Jerome (the King of Westphalia).

" I will give you the Kingdom of Portugal," said Napoleon, " if you divorce this woman whom you have married."

" No."

" Then I can do nothing for you. No country in Europe would endure your wife as its Queen. I should not dare to ask any country to endure her."

Lucien was furious—as is not remarkable. They began to talk about other matters and Napoleon mentioned the fact that Ferdinand the Prodigal of Spain was anxious to marry a Bonaparte princess.

" What about your daughter Charlotte ? "

" She is not accustomed to courts."

Nevertheless Napoleon wished to see this girl, the daughter of a good mother (who had been able neither to read nor write) and wished to test her discretion and her ability. He persuaded Lucien to send her to Paris to stay with their mother and to take part in the gaieties of the Court.

Then the brothers separated once more, coldly, yet not so unkindly as has often been stated. Napoleon turned his attention to the Pope, who had refused to shut his harbours to English ships. The Holy Father was bidden to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" or to make up his mind to the loss of his lands. The Pope refused to submit. Some of his lands were immediately occupied by French troops. He retaliated three months later, when Rome became a part of the New Italy, by pronouncing against Napoleon the excommunication of Holy Church.

The news of this excommunication caused no excitement in France, where the spirit of the Revolution had set free the minds of men from the bondage of priests and priestcraft. But it was a very different matter in Spain where the people were steeped in ignorance and superstition, where the Inquisition still flourished, and where the rule of priests and monks was universal and nearly absolute.

All the hundreds of thousands of Spanish priests informed their flocks that Napoleon had raised his wicked hands against the Holy Ghost in the person of the Holy Father, and that this evil man had now been cursed with bell, book, and candle. It was a sin, from henceforth, to help him or to have any dealings with him. Good sons of the Church could only hold him and his infidel Frenchmen in loathing and abhorrence. The people of Spain, who had so lately welcomed the French armies, began to shrink from them.

And so King George III found a new and a strange ally: that Catholic Church which he professed to hold in abhorrence and against even the most modest claims of which he had set his face—in England—like a flint.

## CHAPTER LVIII

### CASTLES IN SPAIN

Marie Walewski followed her lover to Paris and took a house there. And, strangely enough, Josephine became her friend.

There hangs over this episode a cloud of darkness, but it is evident that Napoleon told his wife, who had never loved him, about the woman who had given him her love. Perhaps he knew that this frankness would have on Josephine the effect it did have—of making her very happy.

For it was not the loss of Napoleon's love which Josephine feared, but the loss of his companionship and of the position which wifehood gave her. She had never loved him; and nothing is clearer than that she never came to love him. But she admired him always and immeasurably; and she understood him. His friendship was very precious to her, and she shrank with an almost physical terror from the idea of finding a rival to her throne.

Marie had the supreme merit in Josephine's eyes that she was no rival to anything which Josephine valued. She was merely a woman who loved Napoleon and who, loving him, asked nothing in return for her love, neither social position nor money nor prolonged attention. Moreover, Marie was a kind of insurance against the dreadful danger of a divorce and a second marriage. Marie was married. And in any case her position was not such that Napoleon could—though he considered the matter—have become her husband.

Therefore Josephine welcomed the lovely Polish girl,

and made a friend of her. She seems to have done everything in her power to encourage Napoleon's love for Marie and Marie's love for Napoleon—for there was nothing of the dog in the manger in poor Josephine's character. She seems to have believed, too, that now, at last, the shadow of divorce was removed from her own life. She became cheerful once more and threw herself with all her old enthusiasm into the social life of the Court. And, as always, Napoleon gave her his friendship and his confidence.

"Josephine," he stated at St. Helena, "never failed to accompany me on all my journeys; neither fatigue nor privation could deter her from following me; and she employed importunity and even artifice to gain her point. . . . If I stepped into my carriage at midnight, to set out on the longest journey, to my surprise I found Josephine all ready prepared, though I had no idea of her accompanying me.

"'But,' I would say to her, 'you cannot possibly go; the journey is too long and will be too fatiguing for you.'

"'Not at all,' she would reply.

"'Besides, I must set out instantly.'

"'Well, I am quite ready.'

"'But you must take a great deal of luggage.'

"'Oh no, everything is packed up.'

"And I was generally obliged to yield. In a word, Josephine rendered her husband happy and constantly proved herself his sincerest friend. At all times and on all occasions she manifested the most perfect submission and devotedness; and thus I shall never cease to remember her with tenderness and gratitude."

When Napoleon returned to Paris from his interview in Italy with Lucien, Lucien's daughter Charlotte, "Lolotte," as she was called, arrived to be approved—or rejected—as the prospective wife of Ferdinand the Spanish Prodigal Son. It is sufficiently evident that Napoleon had no love of this idea of marrying his niece to a worthless Royal reprobate. He sent the girl to live with his mother, and gave orders that her letters should be shown to him before being sent to their destination. From these

letters he intended to judge of Lolotte's fitness to become Queen of Spain.

A shock awaited him. The daughter of Lucien the fire-eater had inherited all her father's pungency of expression. The letters were full of biting sarcasms about grandmother, uncles and aunts and cousins. Poor Letitia was described as a miser, and that was not the worst of the uncomplimentary remarks about her relatives which this young girl permitted herself. Napoleon called a family council to decide whether or not Lolotte should be given to Ferdinand. He read extracts from some of the letters, with, Mereval says, a malicious glee—for there were places at which Lolotte's views and those of her distinguished uncle coincided. It was agreed that Lolotte had been denied by Providence the tact and wisdom necessary to a Queen, and—greatly to her own delight—she was sent packing back to her father in Italy. Lucien received her with joy and thankfulness.

Lolotte having proved unequal to Queenship, Napoleon returned with a sense of relief to a plan which had been forming in his mind. Spain was essential to him if he were to compel England to make peace—for Spain holds the gateway of the Mediterranean. But there was absolutely nobody among the rulers of Spain whom he could trust . . . least of all perhaps Ferdinand. Moreover the Spaniards were being hopelessly misgoverned. Spain was bankrupt, priest-ridden, down-trodden, and steeped in ignorance and superstition. The Man of France resolved to do over again what Louis XIV had done before him: to give Spain a new King, his own brother, and to reform her government and her finances.

He wished, though, to do this with at least an appearance of legality—so as, if possible, to secure the support of the Spaniards for their new King. So he responded to the urgent request of poor half-witted King Charles and his Queen that he would come to their rescue and the rescue of Godoy, the Queen's lover, by requesting the King and Queen to meet him at Bayonne on the French frontier. He sent orders at the same time, to his

brother-in-law, Murat, his Commander-in-Chief in Spain, to bring Godoy, under a safe escort (since the Spaniards longed to tear the fellow limb from limb), to the same rendezvous.

And then, in peremptory language, he demanded of Ferdinand the Prodigal that he, too, should come to Bayonne. Napoleon carefully refrained from calling Ferdinand King, though Ferdinand now called himself King, and was so called by the whole Spanish nation.

Ferdinand the Prodigal was not at all eager to go to Bayonne and meet Napoleon. But he saw that he had no choice in the matter, for Spain was full of French troops. Nor were the Spaniards at all eager that Ferdinand should go, for the priests were already in full cry against the Man who had dared to " rob " the Pope and whom the Holy Father had excommunicated. Were there not French soldiers in Rome the Holy City !

The great mass of the Spanish common folk was entirely illiterate and completely under the dominion of the priests. A wave of religious fervour and fury began to sweep over Spain. Ferdinand, that worthless scoundrel, was portrayed to the people as a saviour, the man who had rid the country of his mother's lover, Godoy ; Napoleon was portrayed as a very devil in human form. The priests, too, had the active support of King George and the English War Lords who were watching with the most feverish anxiety every move in the Spanish game.

So violent were the feelings which the priests had aroused that the inhabitants of the villages through which Ferdinand had to pass on his way to Bayonne actually tried to prevent their hero from continuing his journey.

In spite of these attempts, however, the prodigal son reached his destination—where Napoleon was already waiting for him. He saw, with bitter mortification, that he was received not as a King but merely as a Prince. That, as he knew, meant that Napoleon did not recognize his new Kingship. When, a little later, the big, old-fashioned travelling carriage which brought his father

and mother came lurching over the frontier, his worst fears were confirmed. Charles and the Queen were greeted by the French as reigning sovereigns.

Napoleon received them as such, and the old couple literally fell on his neck. Their joy increased almost to fever-heat when Godoy—"our friend"—was restored to them. But their hatred of Ferdinard the Prodigal was without bounds. *The Queen of Spain actually begged Napoleon to put her son to death for having tried to seize his father's throne.* Poor half-witted Charles brandished his walking-stick in Ferdinand's face and threatened to assault him. Meanwhile Ferdinard, who saw that he had walked into the hands of his enemies, made a desperate attempt to save himself. He sent off letters to Madrid saying that he was betrayed, and he implored Napoleon to recognize him as King.

Napoleon by this time knew his Ferdinand. He had come to Spain with but one object in view—peace with England. And Ferdinand would not help him to attain that object. On the contrary, Ferdinand would lead Spain away from France towards France's enemies. Napoleon had not a moment to lose. Unless he could force England to make peace immediately England, with her terrible stranglehold on European trade, would ruin him or compel him, at any rate, to fight new wars. It was this consideration which had caused him to take Rome from the Pope and so run the risk of setting the whole Catholic world against him; it was this consideration which had caused him to humble Prussia in the dust and so run the risk of making martyrs of Frederick William and his lovely Queen and of rousing all Germany against him; it was this consideration which had caused him to invade Portugal and run the risk of opening Portuguese America, and Spanish America too, to English commerce. It was, finally, this consideration which was directing his mind to the idea of the conquest of India undertaken jointly by Alexander of Russia and himself. England must be taught to fear war and seek peace or the Revolution—in a world filled with enemies both temporal and spiritual—

was doomed. Even great, heroic France could not struggle for ever against such overwhelming odds.

And so Ferdinand was ordered to cease calling himself King and to hand back the crown of Spain to his father. He had no choice but to obey. The moment he obeyed, poor Charles, who would not have re-crossed the Spanish frontier for any crown on earth, handed the crown to Napoleon, bidding him bestow it on whom he would. Rich pensions and estates in France were at once granted to Charles and his Queen and Godoy, and provision was made also for Ferdinand who, for the time being, was to become the guest of Talleyrand and to be amused with those things which most exactly met his taste—presumably wine, women, and song.

The news of this "deal" drove the blood from the face of every King in Europe. Which of them now could think himself safe? What had happened to half-witted Charles might happen also, God knew, to George of England, to half-witted Gustavus of Sweden, to Alexander the son of Mad Paul. A yell of execration of the "Corsican Ogre" who dared to fight the Kings with their own weapons rang to the skies. The hearts of those who had just bombarded the women and children of Copenhagen with heavy guns, and who had stolen the entire Navy of Denmark, bled for Ferdinand, the disinheritor of his father and mother. The King who could not endure the idea that a Roman Catholic should, in England, possess equal rights with a Protestant, lamented the fate of his Holiness the Pope and the loss to the "Scarlet Woman" of her earthly sovereignty, and allied himself to the upholders of the Spanish Inquisition and the most ruthless priesthood on earth. The men who had proposed that Holland should be handed over to Prussia (in place of Hanover), who had meant to keep the sea-coast possessions of Denmark, who had consented to the seizing of all Northern Italy by Austria and of the free Republic of Genoa by the King of Sardinia, could not restrain their tears at the thought that the "miserably poor, oppressed Spanish people" (the phrase is that of an enemy of Napoleon) were about

to obtain a free constitution, a good government, just laws and religious toleration at the hands of a Bonaparte. What a fearful loss to Spain to lose half-witted Charles and Ferdinand !

Napoleon set his teeth and sent for Joseph from Naples. He told Joseph that he had decided to give him the throne of Spain. Charles gave Joseph his blessing. A new constitution for Spain was drawn up, wise and honest ministers—Spaniards—were chosen, and Joseph departed for Madrid. The vacant throne of Naples, which Joseph had filled to the satisfaction of everybody, was given to Murat the ex-draper's assistant, and his wife, Caroline Bonaparte.

Napoleon had achieved his purpose without firing a shot.

## CHAPTER LIX

### DEEP UNTO DEEP

Napoleon had not reckoned with the Spanish priests—that vast unseen army which, for centuries, had kept the minds of the Spanish people in bondage. Nor, perhaps, had he guessed that the fellow-countrymen of Raleigh and Drake, who had been the champions of Europe against the horrors of Spanish priestcraft and the Holy Inquisition would so easily forget their own glorious past.

No sooner was Joseph entered into Madrid, in that July of the year 1808, than the Spaniards rushed to arms against him, and all Spain became a seething mass of revolt. At a moment when almost the whole of the educated and enlightened opinion in Spain was favourable to the reforms of Napoleon and the cleansing of the corrupt and oppressive government of the Spanish Bourbons, which Joseph promised, the common folk, the wretched, down-trodden peasantry, rose up almost to a man to defend their oppressors and to fight for " King " Ferdinand.

That tremendous rising is still called by most people an outburst of national feeling, of patriotism, of hatred of foreign oppression. Those who use such language seem to forget that half-witted Charles and his Prodigal Son were not Spaniards but Frenchmen whom a French King had forced, only about a century before, on the Spanish nation for the benefit of France. They seem to forget, too, that the Spanish peasantry was the most ignorant in Europe. Reading and writing were almost unknown, and the sole source of information and of opinion was the priesthood. Napoleon's reforms were a danger to the Roman Catholic Church in Spain. They threatened to

set free from religious bondage a great people, and to give that people decent conditions of life—the kind of conditions which France enjoyed and which England enjoyed. Priestcraft was stirred to its muddy deeps.

And before the end of that July, in which he had come as King to Madrid, Joseph was compelled to flee away again—to flee for his life. Before the end of the autumn a British army under Wellington had severely defeated the French in Portugal and a French army of 20,000 men had surrendered to the Spaniards at Baylen in Spain.

So many disasters, coming so swiftly, filled Napoleon, who was returning with Josephine to Paris by way of the French ports, with dismay. Suddenly, there was revealed to him the tremendous power which the Spanish priesthood possessed over the Spanish people. He saw that he was faced not with a war against a King only, but with a war against those who claimed to be the soldiers of the King of Kings. He saw too late that the disasters in Spain would fill all the Kings with new hope and new courage.

These disasters must be remedied at once. *But to remedy them it would be necessary to bring back the Grand Army from Poland and Prussia and Germany.* There was the real disaster. For once his armies had marched away to Spain, the Kings would certainly raise their heads again—Francis of Austria, Frederick William of Prussia, perhaps even his so-called friend Alexander of Russia. In seeking peace with England Napoleon had found a new war with Europe.

He did not quail; he did not hesitate. There was no thought in his mind of compromise or of the surrender of the least jot or tittle of the greatness of Revolutionary France or of the principles of the Revolution. Come what might, the Man of the Revolution would pursue his unvarying policy and adhere to his plan.

It was necessary, though, to find out exactly what was in the mind of Alexander of Russia. When he got back to Paris Napoleon asked Alexander to meet him as soon as possible. Alexander, who was busy conquering Finland,

agreed at once. The town of Erfurt was chosen as the scene of the interview. Napoleon determined that that meeting should, by its importance and its magnificence, wipe out the memory of the defeats in Spain. After all, it was not he himself who had been defeated. If the world saw that Alexander and he remained friends the world would still fear to attack him. And while it still feared, he would rush back to Spain and, in person, bring the priests and their poor dupes to submission. He would, too, drive the English army in Portugal into the sea.

And so the preparations for the meeting at Erfurt were made on a scale to amaze and stagger Europe. All the new Kings of the "League of Friendship" were invited to be present, masses of picked troops were brought to the little German town, actors and actresses came from Paris to present the greatest plays in French literature; an endless series of fêtes and parties was arranged.

Alexander arrived in great good humour, for he had come to get, rather than to give, and "this Spanish business" made him feel pretty sure that he would obtain what he wanted. Napoleon was not now quite so strong as he had been a year ago on the raft at Tilsit. And, since then, Alexander had laid his hands firmly on Finland which he hoped soon to possess. His mind was set now on Turkey. He had calculated all the chances. If he made friends with Frederick William of Prussia and Francis of Austria he might manage to defeat Napoleon, but he would not get Turkey—because Francis would never consent to that. So his best plan was to keep up the friendship, begun on the raft, for a little longer, until his ambitions were completely satisfied. It would be time enough, after that, to settle accounts with the Man of the Revolution. What might happen in Spain, in the interval, could not affect Russia very much.

Alexander's decision came as a sore blow to Frederick William and Francis, both of whom were secretly preparing new armies to make war on Napoleon. But the worthy

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Alexander did his best to reassure these good Kings as to his real intentions. Frederick William's Minister, the great Stein, felt sure, after seeing the Russian Emperor on his way to meet Napoleon, that Alexander " was simply biding his time before taking action against France."

From Erfurt itself Alexander wrote to his mother, who detested Napoleon and hated the idea of the Erfurt meeting :

" What other means has Russia of maintaining the alliance (unavoidable and necessary for me) with the dreadful Colossus, than by falling in with his ideas for the time being and showing him that he can prosecute his plans without distrust ? All our efforts must be directed towards obtaining a free breathing time and working, in the greatest secrecy, to increase our forces."

Here was the truth. Having confessed it to his mother Alexander prepared to remove from Napoleon's mind any " distrust " which might linger there.

Napoleon came to Erfurt in the big travelling-carriage with the Normandy horses, and surrounded by his Life Guards ; and, as the cavalcade went jingling through the sunny, October villages of France, men shouted their blessings and women cast their offerings of flowers. There were triumphal arches here and there—though the Man had forbidden them. He had, with him, in his carriage, only Berthier, his Chief of Staff, to whom he might open his mind freely. When he reached Erfurt he mounted a horse and rode off, surrounded by his Guard, to meet Alexander. The arrangements had been well made, for, at a short distance from the town, the travelling-carriage of the Russian Emperor, surrounded by his Guard, was sighted.

The carriage came to a standstill. Alexander, smiling and benevolent, stepped into the roadway. The two " friends " embraced one another. Then Napoleon indicated a beautiful horse, saddled in the Russian fashion, which he begged Alexander to accept. They mounted and rode back to Erfurt to the sound of thundering cannon,

clanging joy-bells, and rolling drums. When they passed along the lines of the guard of honour the soldiers forgot their discipline and shouted, " Long live the Emperors ! "

From that moment the " friends " lived, apparently, only for one another. They worked together, they rode together, they hunted together—on the actual battle-field of Jena ; together they attended all the fêtes and junketings. One night, at the theatre, when Voltaire's *Œdipe* was being played, and when the famous Talma uttered the words, " *The friendship of a great man is a boon from the gods,*" Alexander rose in his seat in the royal box and held out his hands to Napoleon who rose also and took them, while the audience of Kings and Princes cheered and clapped their hands.

Behind the scenes the same cordiality prevailed. Alexander promised to make another attempt to induce England to turn to peace. Napoleon agreed that Alexander should take what he could get in Turkey—but not Constantinople. He would not hear of Constantinople being taken by Russia because, then, Russia and England would be able to unite their forces in the Mediterranean. Alexander sulked a little but did not press the point—was he not meeting Talleyrand, Napoleon's Foreign Minister, secretly, every night, at a mutual friend's house, and hearing from that traitor all Napoleon's plans and hopes and fears ?

Napoleon undoubtedly suspected something of the truth about this royal Mr. Facing-both-Ways ; but he did not, certainly, suspect the whole truth. A little of his trust was still reposed in princes. And so, one day, when Alexander had seemed more distant than usual, he said to Talleyrand :

" Do you know why no one openly goes with me ? Because I have no children and they think that France, as it is at present, will only last my lifetime. That is the secret of all that is happening here. Hence my career demands my divorce, for I have no successor and Joseph counts for nothing as he has only daughters. I must found

a dynasty, and I can only do so by marrying a princess belonging to one of the reigning houses of Europe."

Poor Napoleon! Even he could not fully understand the hatred which the Kings bore him. Even he had his moments of illusion when he forgot that blue blood has no dealings with red, and that princes have seldom felt themselves bound to keep faith or friendship with common men. Alexander's charm of manner did not flag—even when it was gently hinted to him that he might, perhaps, have Napoleon for a brother-in-law; but he showed no enthusiasm for that proposal, saying that, in such a matter, he must abide by the will of his mother. And at night, secretly, the traitor Talleyrand, who had dropped the hint in obedience to his Master's orders, made light of it, telling Alexander that Napoleon was no longer the Man of France but a tryant of whom Europe would be well rid. Talleyrand, after all, belonged to the Old Nobility. More and more the Man of the Revolution found himself alone in a world which knew him not.

In spite of his illusions, that idea must sometimes have haunted his mind, for it is on record that, at Erfurt, he paid less deference to the princes than to the literary men who had been invited to meet him. Goethe was there, and when he was presented, Napoleon cried:

"Oh, here is a man!"

They witnessed together Voltaire's tragedy the *Mort de César*. Napoleon said to Goethe:

"You should write a play giving a loftier and more imposing picture of Cæsar's death than Voltaire has achieved. The world should be made to see that Cæsar would have made it prosperous and that things would have been quite different had he only been given time to complete his noble plans. Such a tragedy would be a lesson alike to Kings and nations."

Goethe had actually planned a tragedy on those very lines, and was filled with wonder and delight. He told Napoleon what he thought and felt.

"Come to Paris," the Man invited. "I request you

personally. There you will find a wider outlook and abundant material for your poems."

Goethe did not come to Paris, but, to quote Fournier, "He never wavered in his admiration of the Emperor's greatness."

I find pleasure in the thought that the author of *Faust* was able to see that which was hidden from all the Kings. Deep truly called unto deep.

## CHAPTER LX

### "MY LITTLE CONSCRIPTS AND MY LONG BOOTS"

The feastings came to an end, and the travelling-carriages were summoned once more. Napoleon and Alexander embraced one another for the last time on this earth. The big Normandy horses went jingling back through the vineyards of France to Paris.

The Man had small reason to be pleased with the result of his meeting; but, at least, he had postponed the evil day of war. Time was given him, now, to pursue his plan for a lasting peace with England.

Already some of his finest troops had been ordered to go to Spain. He followed them, after spending a few days in Paris transacting, at feverish speed, the affairs of his Empire. Once again the big carriage rolled away from the capital towards the frontiers of France.

And once again victory cast her laurels at Napoleon's feet. In a single month the Spanish Army, that creation of a furious priesthood, was destroyed. The Man arrived at the gates of Madrid. On December 4, 1808, the capital of Spain surrendered to him. He did not enter the city, because he did not wish to appear as a conqueror. He came, on the contrary, as a liberator and a deliverer. On the same day the Spanish Inquisition was abolished and its lands declared to be national property; all the rights of the landlords of Spain over the common folk were done away with; the monasteries were reduced to one-third of their number. Thus, that terrible hand which had not spared the Pope himself, fell with crushing force on the priesthood which had defied its power. The Spaniards were told that they might choose between the

kindly rule of Joseph or the iron discipline of the Conqueror.

"It rests with yourselves," Napoleon declared, "to determine whether this Constitution shall henceforth be your law. But if all my efforts prove vain, and if you do not justify my confidence, then I have no choice left but to treat you as a conquered province and find another throne for my brother. I shall then place the crown of Spain on my own head and I shall find means to make it respected by the unruly, for God has given me both the strength and the will to conquer all obstacles."

His boldness had its reward. In Madrid citizens, officials, and even priests took the oath of allegiance to King Joseph. Napoleon's work appeared to be finished so far as the Spanish Army was concerned.

But there remained the British Army, under the command of Sir John Moore, which was operating from Portugal. Once again the Man of the Revolution rushed upon his foes. Mountains and turgid December streams were crossed in a march which scarcely ceased day or night. And, as usual, when his cavalry men were compelled to dismount and lead their horses, because of the difficulty of the going, the Man dismounted also and shared with his beloved soldiers all their hardships and all their dangers. Sir John Moore, however, had had timely warning of the avalanche descending on him and had begun his glorious retreat to Corunna. Thanks to his admirable generalship he managed to draw off his forces without being compelled to give battle until he reached the coast.

And meanwhile, before the coast was reached, Napoleon had received a heavy blow. News came to him from Paris that a plot was hatching there against him, a plot in which the prime movers were Talleyrand and Fouché, his trusted ministers, and in which, actually, Francis of Austria seemed to have a finger.

Instantly the Man handed over the command of his army and set out for his capital. The pursuit of Sir John Moore was continued by Marshal Soult, who, however, did

not succeed in preventing that gallant Englishman from getting his troops on board ship. But Sir John Moore himself was struck down in one of the final encounters. And so

> "We buried him darkly, at dead of night,
> The sods with our bayonets turning,
> By the struggling moonbeams' misty light
> And the lantern dimly burning."

Napoleon, accompanied only by an aide-de-camp, galloped on horseback back to Paris. While yet they supposed that he was hundreds of miles away, the plotters found themselves face to face with the Man against whom they were plotting. Napoleon sent for Talleyrand and demanded an explanation. And when no satisfactory explanation was forthcoming his wrath broke like lightning from heavy skies :

"You are a thief," Napoleon cried. "A blackguard to whom nothing is sacred. You would sell your own father. I have loaded you with gifts and yet there is nothing you are not capable of doing against me. For months past, while you thought my affairs in Spain were looking bad, you have told every one, who would listen to you, that you always disapproved of the enterprise, whereas it was you who first suggested it and constantly urged me on. Who was it but you who betrayed to me the hiding-place of that unfortunate young man [the Duke of Enghien] ? Who was it that advised me to be severe with him ? Now I have it in my power to crush you like glass, but I despise you too thoroughly to take that trouble."

Talleyrand, as he retired, was heard to remark : "What a pity so great a man should have been so badly brought up ! "

Every word which Napoleon spoke was true. And much more might have been added—the betrayal of Napoleon's plans to Alexander at Erfurt, for example. Unhappily the mischief was done. Talleyrand's treachery had fatally encouraged Francis of Austria who had just

received from his Ambassador in Paris, the famous Metternich, a letter declaring :

" We have at last reached the time when allies seem to offer themselves from the very heart of the French Empire. And these allies are not low, contemptible intriguers. Men worthy to represent their nation request our support, and this support is to our own interests and that of posterity. . . ."

" *Request our support !* " So Talleyrand, Napoleon's chief minister, had gone over to the side of the Kings and the " Glittering Beings," and all because the tide of success had seemed to be turning. Napoleon was face to face, now, with the stark truth that it was not the Revolution, nor yet himself, which most of those who surrounded him cared for, but only their own fortunes and their own skins. They had actually been urging Francis of Austria to make a new war on France at the moment when the Man of France had his hands so full in Spain !

The new war came rushing on reckless feet. Once again, in April 1809, Francis of Austria led his armies against Napoleon. On April 12, at eight o'clock at night, a message sent by the " signal telegraph " was delivered at the Tuileries. It was received by Napoleon's aide-de-camp. Napoleon himself had gone to bed and was sleeping. At ten o'clock he was wakened and read the message which told him that the Austrian Army had crossed the frontier. At four o'clock in the morning the travelling-carriage stood in the courtyard of the palace, and the Normandy horses made ready for another journey. Josephine, too, was ready.

" I am leaving my best troops with Joseph [in Spain]," wrote Napoleon, " and am starting alone for Vienna with my little conscripts, my name, and my long boots."

When the day broke, his carriage was rolling out across the plains of France, a little speck on the long pale ribbon of the highway. Four days later the grey riding-coat and the cocked hat were seen for the first time by thousands of French lads, many of them only eighteen years of age,

who had just been called up to the colours. And the mere sight of that familiar figure made, of these boys, soldiers the most redoubtable and the most gallant in Europe.

And once again the tide of victory rushed and roared down the valley of the Danube to Vienna. On April 18, Napoleon learned of a fatal mistake which his enemies had made, and saw that they were delivered into his hand.

"He drew himself up, his eye flashed, and with a joy which betrayed itself in glance, voice, and gesture, he exclaimed: 'Then I have them! Their army is lost! We shall be at Vienna in a month.'"

"He was wrong," comments Fournier; "he was there in three weeks."

In those three weeks a breathless world heard the names of Landshut and Eckmuhl and Ratisbon. Less than a fortnight later a world, which could scarcely believe the news, heard that Napoleon had been defeated by the Archduke Charles of Austria in trying to cross the Danube between the villages of Aspern and Essling, near Vienna.

Napoleon defeated! But in that case the long nightmare of the Kings was ended at last. . . .

The jubilations were short-lived. Napoleon had been checked rather than defeated, and not, solely, by the Austrians. The bridges which he had built over the Danube had been swept away behind him by sudden floods and by devices of the enemy, cutting his army in two and preventing the sending of reinforcements. In spite of this he had managed to get most of his army back to the island in the great river from which the attack had been launched.

But the gallant Lannes, the dearest to him of all his Marshals, had paid with his life for his heroism between the fatal villages. The Man held his dying friend in his arms for a time endeavouring to comfort him. Then he sat down, alone, at a table where some food had been spread.

"He remained motionless, silent, his eyes fixed in a rigid stare, till, at last, the tears welled up and suffused them."

Five weeks later the crossing of the Danube was achieved by the French Army. On the next day, on the field of Wagram (July 5 and 6), Napoleon smote the Austrians hip and thigh and, with one mighty stroke, brought the campaign to an end.

The "little conscripts and the long boots" had triumphed after all.

END OF BOOK IV

# BOOK V

## "THE OPPRESSOR"

"In me they are combating the Revolution."

NAPOLEON in 1815.

## CHAPTER LXI

### "DEATH TO THE TYRANT!"

JOSEPHINE loved the Normandy horses and the rush and thrill of those midnight departures, out of sleeping Paris to the broad highways of France. She loved to sit beside the Man of Battles as he went forth to new prodigies and new triumphs. She loved to post herself somewhere in the rear of the armies, amid the tremendous whirlpool of war, and hear men call her again, as in the old days, "Our Lady of Victory."

That craving for excitement on the greatest scale which the world has ever provided it had brought her to Strassburg with Napoleon. From there, when she had had enough of the rare vintage, she went, once again, to Plombières to take the waters, and to consult, night after night, the cards of destiny. Would Napoleon be persuaded, after all, to divorce her? Plombières held so many bitter memories, for these waters were reputed to be the surest of all Nature's means of fortifying the body for motherhood. That dream might be dismissed now; even the malicious tongues of Paris would scarcely suggest that a woman of forty-six had not abandoned her last hopes.

And, meanwhile, another travelling-carriage was bringing another woman across the plains of France to Strassburg and Vienna. Marie Walewski had received from her lover a summons to join him in the palace of Francis of Austria, to which he had gone after his victory of Wagram and where he meant to stay until the treaty of peace with Austria was drawn up and signed.

The Polish girl needed no urging to rush to the side of the man of her heart. Nor did she ask or desire anything

but his love. While Josephine searched bitterly, and with endless weeping, for assurance that she would not be removed from her place as the first woman in France, Marie was content to hold no position at all except that of the slave of a generous and loving heart. She came to the lovely Palace of Schoenbrunn while still the spell of the campaign, which had just ended, held every mind in thrall. Never, men said, had Napoleon's genius as a soldier shone with so bright a flame. Never had the difference between him and all his imitators been more clearly manifested.

"The Emperor," wrote Napier long afterwards, "journeying day and night . . . arrived at the very hour when his lieutenant [Berthier] was on the point of consummating the ruin of the army. But then was seen the supernatural force of Napoleon's genius. In a few hours he changed the aspect of affairs, and in a few days, *malgré* their immense number, his enemies, baffled and flying in all directions, proclaimed his mastery in an art which, up to that moment, was imperfect; for never, since troops first trod a field of battle, was such a display of military genius made by man."

Marie learned, though, that Napoleon had been wounded in one of the actions. She was told that, while he was seated on the ground watching his troops attacking the town of Ratisbon, a bullet struck him on the right ankle. The news had filled his soldiers with such dismay that they came crowding round him, forgetful of everything else. He had had to mount a horse and ride out among them to calm their fears.

*Supposing that Napoleon had been killed! . . .*

That supposition, the Polish girl soon found, was present to the mind of everybody connected with the Man. Everybody repeated to everybody else that the safety of France, and her freedom, depended on a single human life—since Napoleon had no direct heir. The whole world, too, it was pointed out, was filled with Napoleon's enemies. The nations were beginning to join the Kings in their hatred of France; to-morrow or the next day some

fanatical Austrian or German or Russian might feel himself impelled to play an assassin's part.

There can be little doubt that these anxieties preyed on Marie's mind. Nor was there any mind better qualified than hers to measure their substance. Marie Walewski was a Pole, the daughter of an embittered race which awaited with undying hope the hour of its salvation. She knew only too well that peoples who believe themselves to be oppressed are eternally dangerous, and she could see that half the people of Europe had begun to regard Napoleon as their oppressor. She heard, too, that it had been touch-and-go during the late war whether or not Frederick William of Prussia joined forces with the Austrians. Only the fact of Alexander's friendship with Napoleon had prevented that co-operation; and what was Alexander's friendship worth? Alexander, it is true, had made a show of fulfilling his promise, given at Erfurt, to send an army to help Napoleon if Austria attacked him. But this army had not arrived and it had not, anywhere, engaged the enemy.

The woman who loved Napoleon must have seen that immense, new dangers threatened him, and the woman who loved Poland must have seen that, if her lover succumbed to these dangers, the high hopes of her native land would be ruined. Marie's love was selfless, and so I think that, before she had been long at Schoenbrunn, she had joined her voice to those who urged on Napoleon the necessity of a royal marriage.

A royal marriage would disarm the hatred of the peoples, who would see in it a sign that the Conqueror desired peace rather than war, and it might soften towards him the hatred of the Kings. Moreover it would, if heirs were born, turn away from him the daggers of assassins. How great this last danger had become, everybody knew. Paris was seething with plots and Vienna was soon to discover, in the person of the youth Staps, proof that the German secret societies were as powerful as they were ubiquitous.

Be that as it may, it was at Schoenbrunn, during those summer days in which he had Marie Walewski always by

his side, that Napoleon decided, finally, to obtain a divorce from Josephine.

It was a decision to which he came with very great reluctance both on personal and on public grounds—for Josephine was a part of his life and also, in a sense, a part of the Revolution. To seek marriage with a King's daughter was, perhaps, to admit that the throne of the common folk needed support other than its own strength. It was asking a truce from blue blood. Yet Napoleon was always practical. He knew that France could not go on fighting for ever and he knew that the longing for peace and rest in France was very great. A marriage which gave him an heir would give the Revolution new hope and new security. It might even influence the War Lords of England to turn towards peace. The War Lords had refused Alexander of Russia's request, proffered anew after the meeting at Erfurt, that a reconciliation between themselves and Napoleon might be considered. They knew, as a matter of certainty, that Alexander was not sincere in his peace-making. And, moreover, they had their own interests in Spain to think about. King George replied to Alexander that, though he was bound to the Spaniards by no treaty, yet he had "contracted with this nation, before the whole world, sacred engagements which, in his opinion, bound him as strongly as the most solemn treaties."

The nature of these "sacred engagements" was not specified. But the meaning was clear enough—no talk of peace till King Joseph had retired from the field in favour of Ferdinand the Prodigal Son, the Holy Inquisition, and the priests. For these latter, whatever their faults, would not seek to lay their hands on Gibraltar.

The War Lords, too, had sent an immense expedition to Holland to try to win back that country from the French. But the expedition had been devoured by fever—and ineptitude—on the island of Walcheren, and was already the subject of bitter mirth in London. Indeed, it was said that its failure was the cause of the duel which was fought between Canning and Castlereagh. This failure and the unmerited disasters which were now attending

Wellington's most glorious army in Spain—" We are here worse off than in a hostile country," wrote Wellington. " Never was an army so ill-used. We had no assistance from the Spanish Army ! "—might be additional reasons, if Napoleon got an heir, for bringing the war by sea to an end.

And so Napoleon, having made peace with Francis of Austria, bade the woman who loved him good-bye and set his face to return to Paris. Marie was going back to Poland. The Man was anxious and preoccupied and not even the demonstrations of love which greeted him on the French frontiers could dispel his heaviness. For his eyes saw beyond the present glory to the future darkness. The Pope had just excommunicated him and all his for the second time, and, though the Holy Father had paid for this boldness with the loss of his liberty, yet the fact of a war with all the priests was ominous. The Kings were merely, as Metternich said, " tacking and turning and flattering " in order to gain time " until the day of general deliverance." The friends of the " Glittering Beings " at home had already begun to undermine deeply the foundations of the Revolution. Even the Generals, grown rich and too prosperous, had begun to cast their eyes towards the days of ease.

And then there was the affair of the boy Staps. Napoleon, his faithful Meneval has recorded, was deeply moved by that seemingly trivial incident. Meneval thus describes it :

" One day in October, at Schoenbrunn, while the troops were marching before him at noonday parade, a young man tried to approach the Emperor. This person held a paper in his hands which was thought to be a petition. He was told to hand it to the aide-de-camp in attendance, who was General Rapp, but he answered that he wished to speak to Napoleon. . . .

" The General ordered him to be arrested and taken to the Castle. It was soon known that a large kitchen knife had been found on this young man who was a student of the University of Erfurt. Asked as to what he intended

to do with this knife he had no hesitation in declaring that he wanted to kill Napoleon.

"Informed of this fact, the Emperor, on his return to the Castle, ordered that the young man should be brought into the drawing-room where the Prince of Neufchatel [Berthier] Bernadotte, and Generals Duroc and Savary were present. Staps approached the Emperor with a respectful but determined air. He admitted to Napoleon that he had come with the intention of killing him, although the French sovereign had done him, personally, no harm. He declared that he had the conviction that, in killing the Emperor, he should render a great service to his country and to Europe, and added that he was neither ill nor mad and that he had spoken of his plan to nobody.

"Napoleon had Dr. Corvoisart, who was then at Schoenbrunn, sent for and asked him if he could not find any traces of madness in this young man. The doctor felt his pulse and declared that he could not find any symptoms of mental alienation in him.

"Napoleon, struck by this fanaticism and touched with pity for this precocious murderer, offered to pardon him if he would express his regret for the odious act which he had wished to commit.

"Staps rejected any idea of pardon and said that he regretted bitterly that he had not been able to carry out his plan.

"'But,' said Napoleon, 'you have a family whose ruin you will cause. You will fill the heart of the young girl who loves you with despair. If I grant you your life, will you be grateful to me for it?'

"'I will kill you none the less.'

"The Emperor gave orders that he should be removed, hoping that this young madman would express his repentance and make some revelations. Staps remained three days without eating and as impassive as ever.

* * * * *

"He walked on foot to the place of execution crying, 'Long live Germany! Death to the Tyrant!' Napoleon heard of his execution while on his way from Vienna. . . ."

"Death to the Tyrant!" How terribly that brave cry must have rung in the ears of Paoli's man—even though

he had gone out of his way to save the lad from court-martial and death. So it was not only the Kings now who were his enemies; the peoples also were arraying themselves against him. Could he doubt that there were thousands of other young Germans who felt as Staps had felt, of young Prussians also, and young Russians and young Spaniards and young Englishmen! The Kings by forcing him to engage in endless warfare had made of him a figure of oppression.

And this was happening at the very moment when the spirit of the Revolution, the spirit of Nationhood and of free manhood, was being spread by the French armies all over Europe. By a strange and tragic irony the struggle to save the spirit of the Revolution was transfiguring the most deadly enemies of that spirit, the Kings, making of them, in spite of themselves, the leaders of oppressed peoples and actually anointing them with the devotion of the common folk.

The Man of the Revolution, he whose ceaseless labour and courage and superhuman genius alone had secured the spirit of the Revolution to Europe, he who had smitten these Kings in the name and for the sake of the common folk, saw himself becoming, in men's eyes, the enemy of that freedom which he had made, "a tyrant," a monster.

As the Normandy horses went jingling towards Paris, Napoleon must have experienced strange and terrible thoughts. Had he not just beheld a gang of men, chained together, working in the gardens which one of his new Kings—the King of Würtemberg—was laying out and been told that the crime these men had committed was rebellion against this new Kingship!

General Rapp, who shared the big travelling-carriage on this occasion with Napoleon, says that, during the journey, the Man referred again and again to the "unfortunate wretches" whom he had seen in the royal garden. He declared:

"The King of Würtemberg is a very harsh man; but he is very faithful. Of all the sovereigns in Europe he possesses the greatest share of understanding."

It is possible, I think, to read into these words the dismay which the effects of his own plans were causing Napoleon at this moment. *To think that common men, whose only sin was patriotism, should work in chains, in a King's garden, because of him, the Emperor of the common folk, the man who, at Vienna, had just given the poor permission to gather their winter fuel in the Imperial forests.*

The Normandy horses came to Fontainebleau and Napoleon stepped down from his carriage in the Court of the White Horse. He glanced about him. There were no guards on duty, there were no servants at the doors. Had his arrival, then, not been announced?

And why had not Josephine come to meet him?

## CHAPTER LXII

### THE SECRET DOOR

JOSEPHINE came to Fontainebleau. But several days passed before Napoleon could bring himself to tell her about the decision which he had reached. He was moody and silent; she nervous and distraught.

On the last day of November 1809 they dined together. Scarcely a word was spoken. Then, immediately after dinner, the Man bade his wife come with him to his work-room. He shut the door behind her and, according to her own account of the event, she saw that his face was set, like the face of a statue.

"Josephine, my dear Josephine," he said gently, "you know how much I have loved you; that to you, to you alone, I owe the little happiness I have experienced in this world. But, Josephine, my destiny is more powerful than my will; my dearest affections must yield to the interests of France. . . ."

He paused. Josephine put out her hands for support. She murmured:

"No more. I have known. I understand. . . ."

And then she swayed on her feet and sank to the floor.

"Suddenly," declares M. de Bausset, who had been on duty in the dining-room, "I heard loud cries proceeding from the Emperor's drawing-room and emitted by the Empress Josephine. The usher, thinking that she was ill, was about to open the door, but I prevented him, saying that the Emperor would call for help if he thought right. I was standing near the door when Napoleon opened it, and perceiving me said hastily:

" ' Come in, Bausset, and shut the door.'

" I entered the drawing-room and saw the Empress lying on the floor uttering piercing cries :

" ' I shall not survive it ! ' she kept repeating.

" Napoleon said to me :

" ' Are you strong enough to lift Josephine and carry her to her apartments by the private staircase communicating with her room so that she may have all the care and attention her state requires ? '

" With Napoleon's help I raised her in my arms, and he, taking a candlestick off the table, lighted me and opened the door of the drawing-room. When we reached the head of the staircase, I pointed out to him that it was too narrow for me to carry her down without running the risk of a fall. Napoleon called an attendant, gave him the candle, and himself took hold of Josephine's legs to help me to descend more gently. When she felt the efforts I was making to save myself from falling she said in a low voice :

" ' You are holding me too tightly.'

" I then saw that I need be under no uneasiness as to her health and that she had not lost consciousness for a moment. The Emperor's agitation and anxiety were extreme. In his trouble he told me the cause of all that had occurred. His words came out with difficulty and without sequence ; his voice was choked and his eyes were full of tears. . . . The whole scene did not last more than seven or eight minutes. Napoleon sent instantly to fetch Corvoisart [his doctor], Queen Hortense, Cambacérès and Fouché, and before returning to his own room he went to assure himself of Josephine's state and found her more calm and resigned."

Coming out of the room Napoleon met Hortense.

" Go, daughter," he cried to her. " Keep up courage."

" Oh, sire," cried the sobbing woman, " I have courage."

When she recovered Josephine gave herself to weeping. Napoleon sat alone, unable to work, in his study, intensely restless and anxious.

And so he remained for a fortnight, until the day of the official proclamation of the divorce.

That took place in the palace of the Tuileries in Paris

in the presence of Napoleon's mother; Louis (the King of Holland), and his wife Hortense; Jerome (the King of Westphalia) and his wife; Murat (the King of Naples) and his wife Caroline; Eugène, Josephine's gallant son; and Pauline, as well as of Josephine herself and Napoleon.

Josephine entered the room alone; she was pale and she trembled. But she remained the gracious figure of old days. Her tall son and her daughter came to her side. Napoleon took her hand and turned to the officials who were present.

"God knows," he said, in the course of a short speech, "what such a resolution has cost my heart. . . . I have nothing but praise for the tenderness and devoted attachment of my well-beloved wife. She has enriched thirteen years of my life. . . ."

His eyes became blurred with tears. His voice failed him. Josephine, who had her reply to this speech written, tried to read it and failed. She handed it to an official to read for her. . . . She signed the fatal decree. . . . And then she passed out of the room holding her head high in the presence of her one-time enemies, Napoleon's mother ("Madame Mère") and Caroline and Pauline. Her children followed her. It had been arranged that she should retain the title of "Empress and Queen," and receive £80,000 (afterwards increased to £120,000) a year.

Napoleon had decided to go the next morning and live at the Petit Trianon, at Versailles, poor Marie Antoinette's little palace, while Josephine went to her own house, Malmaison. The carriages were at the door. Napoleon was making ready to depart. Suddenly he turned to his secretary:

"Meneval, come with me."

He opened a secret door in his study and led the way by a winding staircase to Josephine's rooms. He opened another door. Josephine was revealed, seated alone, weeping bitterly. She heard him and jumped up. She flung herself into his arms, sobbing and crying.

" He pressed her to his bosom," says Meneval, " kissing her over and over again. But in the excess of her emotion she had fainted. I ran to the bell and summoned help. The Emperor, wishing to avoid the sight of a grief he was unable to assuage, placed the Empress in my arms as soon as he saw she was coming back to consciousness, ordered me not to leave her, and withdrew rapidly by the drawing-rooms of the ground floor at the door of which his carriage was waiting for him."

It was raining floods. A few hours later Josephine left the palace for ever.

That night, from Trianon, Napoleon wrote to Josephine at Malmaison :

" You would know very imperfectly all the affection I have for you, if you imagined that I can be happy if you are unhappy, and contented if you are ill at ease."

A few days later Josephine and Hortense came to Trianon to dine with Napoleon. The next day he wrote :

" My Dear,—I lay down after you left me yesterday. I am going to Paris. I wish to hear that you are cheerful. I shall come to see you during the week. I have received your letters which I am going to read in the carriage."

And the next day :

" I have been thoroughly tired in revisiting the Tuileries ; that great palace seemed empty to me and I felt lost in it."

And then :

" I want badly to see you, but I must have some assurance that you are strong and not weak ; I, too, am rather like you, and it makes me frightfully wretched."

## CHAPTER LXIII

### A MAIDEN'S PRAYER

A GIRL of eighteen was chosen as Napoleon's second wife. She was not a beauty in the sense that Josephine had been a beauty; but she was "bonny" and fresh of face, and she had lovely light chestnut hair. These were, however, very secondary considerations; what really mattered was that she was the daughter of Francis of Austria.

The daughter of Francis of Austria, young as she was, must have experienced a thrill of amazement and horror when she learned the fate which was in store for her. For, from her earliest childhood, she had heard Napoleon's name spoken in accents of fear and detestation. Was not this the dreadful soldier of that French Revolution which had brutally murdered her aunt, poor Marie Antoinette? And had not this man defeated her father in battle after battle —Marengo, Austerlitz, and now Wagram—and, on two separate occasions, driven her mother and all the members of her family out of the palace? Had he not grossly insulted her aunt, the Queen of Naples—in addition to depriving her of her throne?

The Archduchess Marie Louise, however, had the courage of her breed. It is quite possible that she was aware of her father's policy in regard to Napoleon—"tacking, twisting, flattering," to gain time—and that she was willing to sacrifice herself for her country and her family. Austrian Princesses were all, as she well knew, expected to help on the good work of maintaining the royal house to which they belonged in strength and prosperity.

"Since Napoleon's divorce from his wife," wrote this self-possessed girl to a girl friend, "I open the *Frankfurter Zeitung* always expecting to see the name of his new bride, and I confess the delay makes me anxious. I place my lot in the hands of Providence who alone knows what is best. But if it must happen, I am willing to sacrifice my well-being for the good of the State, convinced that true happiness is only found in the fulfilment of one's duties. Pray that it may not happen!"

It is not difficult to sympathize with Marie Louise. Napoleon was twenty-two years older than herself; he had a wife living; and he fulfilled, in his person, none of the usual dreams of girlhood. The daughter of Francis certainly despised him as a "common man"; the Princess of Austria certainly hated him as the most dangerous enemy Austria had ever known; the romantic girl certainly disliked him as a middle-aged suitor who was, notoriously, small of stature and growing rather stout; the woman certainly shrank from him as the Statesman who was making a carefully calculated choice between herself and the Princess Anne of Russia, Alexander's fourteen-year-old sister. Nor can the news that Alexander had, though not in so many words, declined the honour of mingling his blue blood with the red blood of the Revolution, have made the prospect, as seen by Marie Louise, more attractive. She was Hobson's choice and she knew it.

Francis knew it also; but Francis was in the position of the traveller pursued by a pack of wolves, who finds it necessary to sacrifice one of his horses in order to purchase a moment's respite. His poor little daughter, by becoming Napoleon's wife, would buy for Austria, and for all the other Kings, that breathing-space which was essential if the Man of the Revolution was to be finally overwhelmed. The Kings needed time more than anything else in the world, and Marie Louise could obtain it for them.

And so this "bride of the breathing-space" was offered and accepted. Marie Louise learned that her prayers had not been answered and Francis of Austria told the world:

" I would never have given him my daughter if I had not known that his family was as good as my own."

So poor Charles's blue blood had come in useful after all ! Napoleon, though, when he heard about this remark of his future father-in-law, was observed to smile.

" I fancy," he said, " that my patent of nobility dates from the Battle of Montenotte " (the first of his victories).

Berthier (loaded with superb diamonds for the bride-elect) was sent to Vienna to make the formal proposal of marriage, and the Archduke Charles, Francis's brilliant brother and Napoleon's greatest adversary on the field of battle, agreed to act as proxy for the illustrious bridegroom. The marriage took place on March 11, 1810, in the Augustine Church in Vienna.

Immediately after the ceremony the poor little bride, who had not yet seen her husband, left her home to go to France. She took a last lingering look at her playroom with its simple furnishings, and is said to have touched these dear furnishings in a kind of bewilderment of sorrow before she finally consented to be led away. Her big blue eyes were all clouded with tears.

Her uncle and the gallant Berthier escorted her to her carriage. The gates of Schoenbrunn closed behind her. To-morrow . . . or to-morrow . . . or to-morrow the tyrant and oppressor who had demanded this sacrifice would appear to claim his own.

## CHAPTER LXIV

### THE BLACK CARDINALS

But the fears of the little Princess were soon changed to wonder. Almost at every stoppage-place Kings came to her carriage and bowed before her. And at every stopping-place there were letters from Napoleon—the very kindest letters which it is possible to imagine, and flowers and fruit and sweets. She learned, too, that her new husband had ordered that, every day, full particulars of her health and happiness should be sent to her father.

She took the trouble to answer—in good French—all the letters which she received.

And then, one day, a day of dark and lowering skies, an open carriage appeared in the highway in front of her carriage. She heard a gasp from Caroline Bonaparte, the Queen of Naples, who had met her at the frontier and was driving with her.

"*Good gracious, it is he: the Emperor.*"

A moment later the door of the carriage was opened. Napoleon, who had cast aside all ceremony and upset all the carefully made plans, stood, bowing, at the door. He entered the carriage and sat down between his bride and his sister.

The postilions were told to drive fast, and they passed at a gallop the group of dignitaries who were waiting with speeches in their hands to receive Marie Louise officially. I have often wondered whether or not Napoleon told his bride, as they galloped along, that he had actually been learning how to waltz so as to be able the better to amuse her—thus repeating the method of wooing which he had adopted in his boyhood at Valence.

THE EMPRESS MARIE-LOUISE.
From the miniature in the possession of Sir Morgan Crofton, Bart.

This was a different Napoleon from him who had written to Josephine scarcely eighteen months before from Erfurt:

"I assisted at the Weimar ball. The Emperor Alexander dances; I don't. Forty years are forty years."

Napoleon in truth had spared nothing to make his little Princess happy. He had actually ordered that the paintings of his battles against the Austrians should be removed from the palace lest they offended the daughter of Francis.

That night he supped with Marie Louise and Caroline in the palace of Compiègne.

"The girl's face," says Meneval, "was flushed with the journey and by her nervousness. Pale chestnut hair, silky and abundant, framed a fresh, full face, over which eyes, full of sweetness, spread a charming expression. . . . Candour and innocence were breathed from all her person."

Napoleon seems to have been completely carried away. Marie Louise was his lawful wife and he was her husband; from that day he lived as her husband in spite of the elaborate court etiquette which had arranged things very differently. There were, however, further ceremonies to be gone through in Paris, a civil and a religious marriage—the latter in the Great Gallery of the Louvre Museum.

Only one circumstance disturbed the general rejoicing—the absence from this religious ceremony of a number of Cardinals who had been commanded to attend it. These clerics pleaded, as their excuse, that the Pope had not consented to the divorce of Josephine, an insult to his bride which Napoleon punished by ordering them to leave Paris and forbidding them to wear their red robes. The Parisians promptly nicknamed them: "The Black Cardinals."

That night Paris was roped with light and all her citizens gave themselves up to the most reckless rejoicing. Poor little Marie Louise began to understand that her views about Napoleon would need some revising. She had not found him nearly so disagreeable as she had expected.

Moreover, the fact that he had had every single piece of furniture in her beloved playroom at Schoenbrunn brought to Paris, during these last few days, and put in a new playroom there showed that he had a kind heart—whatever people might say against him.

She wrote to her girl friend :

" Heaven has heard your prayers on my behalf when I married. May you soon experience happiness similar to mine."

## CHAPTER LXV

### A HUNDRED GUNS

The Revolution, thanks to Napoleon's marriage, was surrounded, now, with a bodyguard of eight Kings.

There was, first and foremost, Francis of Austria, Napoleon's father-in-law. Then there were the three Electors of the Holy Roman Empire, whom Napoleon himself had crowned: the King of Saxony, the King of Bavaria, and the King of Würtemberg. Finally there were the four Bonaparte Kings: brothers Joseph (of Spain), Louis (of Holland), and Jerome (of Westphalia), and brother-in-law Murat, Caroline's husband (of Naples). It was, surely, reasonable to hope that this royal bodyguard would be a sufficient protection against the three Kings who stood aloof: King George of England, Frederick William of Prussia, and Alexander of Russia, especially as Alexander still called himself the friend of France and as Frederick William was still too weak to do anything alone.

But Kings, like women, as Napoleon was soon to find, are "kittle cattle." Of all the eight on whom he counted to support him, not one was, in fact, fit to be trusted. Father-in-law Francis was already, on the morrow of his daughter's marriage, preparing for a new war. The Kings of Saxony and Bavaria and Würtemberg had their eyes strained to observe the slightest movement which might betray in which direction the cat of fortune was going to jump. Joseph, in Spain, was doing his best to become a Spaniard, and Louis, in Holland, had already become a Dutchman. Murat and Caroline were up to their necks in plots to increase their powers at the expense

of France, while the gay Jerome was filling his good German subjects with horror at his reckless extravagance and with shame at his profligate behaviour.

Louis' case was the worst—for the attachment of Holland to France was of absolutely vital importance to the carrying out of the great plan to ruin the merchant princes of England, that plan on the success of which the hope of making peace with England depended. Yet the boy, on whose behalf Napoleon had once deprived himself of every luxury and actually learned to cook "nourishing broth," no sooner found himself seated on the Dutch throne than he began to intrigue with King George III against France.

"Are you an ally of France or of England?" wrote the indignant and mortified Napoleon. He added: "Your Majesty will find in me a brother so long as I find in you a Frenchman. But if you forget the bonds that attach you to our common country, you cannot complain if I forget those that Nature has placed between us."

"Poor Louis has become a Dutchman," said his mother crisply, after receiving a visit from her fourth son; "he is no longer a bit of a Frenchman, not a bit!"

Louis, in other words, was ranged with the Kings against the Revolution, whereas the sole reason for making him King of Holland had been that he might support the Revolution against the Kings. Napoleon had chosen his own brothers as Kings simply because he thought he could trust them more completely than any others, and because they knew all the reasons which had led him to desire to surround France with small allied states and at the same time to shut every harbour against the ships of England. He had looked for determined helpers; he found determined opponents. He had looked for friends of the free spirit of the Revolution; he found only admirers of blue blood, common men who grew more impressed every day with their royalty.

"Certainly," he cried to Louis, "in placing you on the throne of Holland I thought I was seating there a French

citizen as devoted as myself to the grandeur of France and as jealous of all the interests of the mother country. . . . A Frenchman has upon you the same effect as the sight of water on a man afflicted with hydrophobia."

Louis' excuse was that Holland, like Denmark and Portugal and Spain and Sicily, was at the mercy of England —and England had no mercy on small nations who dared to resist her. Did Napoleon wish to see the Dutch coast towns bombarded to ruins as Copenhagen had been bombarded? Moreover, the system of keeping out English ships and English goods was ruining the Dutch merchants. As King of Holland his first duty was, surely, towards his subjects.

An interview took place between the brothers and Napoleon answered these and the other arguments which Louis advanced. We are fighting, he pointed out, for our lives against enemies who have sworn to destroy us—all of us. There is no hope of a settlement, because we represent the French Revolution and the ideas on which the French Revolution is founded. These ideas are utterly hateful to every King, every priest, and every aristocrat in Europe. The Kings and the priests and the lords will never, if they can help it, make peace with men who believe that the common people are the real rulers.

Consequently it is necessary to force the Kings to make peace, and this can only be done by forcing England to make peace. At the present moment France is engaged in a death struggle with England because it is England who is the backbone of the whole attack on the Revolution. If England wins, the Revolution will be destroyed, the Old Kings will be brought back to Paris, France will be narrowly confined within her old frontiers and stepping-stone states will be placed all round her so that, if she gives any trouble, she can easily be attacked and invaded.

Holland is one of those stepping-stone states. And so either Holland must act with France or must be prepared to be made use of by the enemies of France—as Portugal was being made use of a few years ago. To act with

France means to keep out English ships and goods and so assist in the ruin of that overseas trade which is the life-blood of England.

Louis had no answer to this logic, and promised to act with his brother in future. But he was a soured and a sick man. His marriage to Hortense, Josephine's daughter, had been a miserable failure, and the loss of his eldest son from diphtheria had added a new bitterness to his life. He returned to Holland feeling that he had been badly treated, and even went so far as to urge the Dutch to fight Napoleon . . . the brother who had starved for him, the friend who had written to him after he married Hortense :

" Your quarrels with the Queen are reaching the ears of the public. You treat your young wife as you might treat a regiment. You have the best and most virtuous wife in the world and you are making her miserable. Let her dance as much as she pleases ; it is fitting at her age. My wife is forty and yet, from a field of battle, I have written to her to go to a ball ; and do you expect a woman of twenty, who has still all her illusions, to see her life slipping away and to live either like a cloistered nun or like a nurse, always occupied in washing her baby ? Make the mother of your children happy. There is only one way to do it, and that is to show her great tenderness and confidence."

The Dutch did not wish, or did nor dare, to fight Napoleon. Louis fell into a mood of depression and anger. One day he packed up and, without telling anybody what he was doing, slipped quietly out of his kingdom. He hid himself.

Europe had not before witnessed the strange spectacle of a King playing hide and seek with his relations, and Europe was immensely amused. But Napoleon could not share that amusement. Louis' behaviour, and the behaviour of Joseph in Spain, of Jerome in Westphalia, of Murat and Caroline in Naples, proved to him that these brothers and that sister of his utterly failed to understand the true state of affairs. They did not seem to know that

there was a war in existence, a terrible, merciless war on the outcome of which the fate of every one of them depended. They seemed to think that they were Kings in the old, everlasting sense, and that, in consequence, they could do what they liked. Not even the blood of the Duke of Enghien had weaned them from the idea of poor Charles, that blue blood flowed in their own veins.

The Man of the Revolution realized that it was not only the Bourbons now who were arrayed against him. He was under the painful necessity of contending also against the Bonapartes. To these brothers and that sister of his, and to these new Dukes and Duchesses and Lords whom he had created, the Revolution, from which all of them had sprung, and of which all of them should have been the keepers and guardians, seemed to mean nothing. With a sense of disgust Napoleon realized that it is the title, the name, about which the vast majority of men and women are concerned, and not the reality which lies behind the title and the name. All Kings were—*Kings*, that is to say, enemies of the new France.

Fate, as Napoleon so often insisted, is inexorable in her irony. The urgent need of establishing the strongest possible administration to combat the internal plots and weakness of France had driven him to assume the crown in order to be free, on the frontiers, to save the Revolution. That act had made it necessary to create new thrones—instead of new republics—round about the frontiers of France to serve as barriers against her enemies ; and to choose, as the occupants of these thrones, men whose loyalty to the Revolution and to himself might be depended on. But the thrones—those symbols of sovereignty—had proved stronger than the will of their creator. Not even the strongest ties of blood and of sympathy had been able to withstand their immemorial seduction. Napoleon must have wished, in that hour, that it had been possible for him to rebuild the government of France on some other than the monarchical model.

So far as he personally was concerned, however, Kingship had served its purpose and was about to fulfil

that purpose. France learned with a thrill of unspeakable joy and relief that the young Empress Marie Louise was soon to become a mother.

Napoleon's infatuation for his bride had not diminished but rather had increased, and now he absolutely worshipped her. So much so, indeed, that the self-possessed Marie Louise remarked one day with a smile to her father's Ambassador, Metternich:

"I am not afraid of Napoleon, but I begin to think he is of me."

And to her friend she spoke of the "grace and kindness that are natural to him."

When Marie Louise's hour of trial began on March 19, 1811, Napoleon became terribly agitated and insisted on remaining in the dressing-room next to his wife's apartment. Time dragged on tardy feet and the fears of the husband were multiplied a hundredfold. Then, suddenly, the door of the dressing-room opened and Dubro, the surgeon, entered.

"Well?"

"It will be impossible, Your Majesty, to save the child's life except at the cost of that of the mother."

Napoleon did not hesitate an instant.

"Think only of the mother," he cried in agonized tones.

He entered the sick-room and took his poor little wife's hands. He was told that an operation would be necessary and resolved to remain until it had been performed; but the strain was too much for him.

"The Emperor," says Constant, "could not endure, for more than a few moments, the anguish of this horrible operation which lasted twenty minutes. He let go the Empress's hand, which he had been holding, and retired into the dressing-room as pale as the dead and almost beside himself."

He remained there until he was told, at eight in the morning of March 20, that the child was born, and that it was a boy. Instantly he rushed into his wife's room and

gathered her in his arms. The child was lying on the bed and seemed to be dead, but strangely enough, Napoleon took no notice of it until, after a considerable lapse of time, it uttered a cry. Then he bent down and kissed it.

Already the salute of guns which was to announce the birth was being fired. There were to be twenty-one guns for a girl, a hundred for a boy. At the sound of the twenty-second gun a deep roar of cheering from the crowd in the Tuileries gardens penetrated to the sick-room. It was the voice of France uplifted in welcome.

The Man walked to the window of the room and raised a corner of one of the curtains. He looked out on that delirious multitude which had come to share with him his great joy. Large tears were observed to roll down his cheeks.

He dropped the curtain and came back to the bed. A second time he kissed his little son, the heir to that French Revolution which his courage and patience and sacrifice had established.

"It is the fashion," wrote Napoleon about this time, "to praise me and at the same time to decry France. But who does not love France, does not love me."

## CHAPTER LXVI

### THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS

THE Revolution had an heir. And its heir, the tiny "King of Rome," as Napoleon called the babe, was the grandson of Francis of Austria. Eight Kings, too, served as the bodyguard of the new France, and another King, Alexander of Russia, was her friend at least in name. Moreover that King of Sweden, Gustavus, who had been France's foe, had been driven forth by his own subjects from his throne and replaced on that throne by a King who was friendly to Napoleon. The thrones of Sweden and of Denmark were both for the Man; the throne of Portugal belonged to him.

All the shores of the Baltic Sea, then, were closed to England's ships; and so, too, were all the shores of the North Sea and of the Atlantic down to Gibraltar and all the shores of the Mediterranean as far as the Isles of Greece. Surely now, at last, the War Lords and the "shopkeepers" would condescend to make peace. It certainly looked as if they must so condescend for, as Dr. Holland Rose says:

"Ruled by an ill-assorted ministry and a King whose reason was now hopelessly overclouded, weakened by the strangling grip of the Continental System, England seemed on the verge of ruin."

England, however, as the late Lord Fisher used to say, "never succumbs." Our people had been taught to hate Napoleon by men who feared, not Napoleon, but freedom. The same men had driven Napoleon to despair, so that, in spite of himself, he was forced to become our deadly foe. It was too late, now, to turn back from the policy

which had led us to bombard Copenhagen and to espouse the cause of the Spanish Inquisition. Our backs were to the wall, and we had to fight or go under. In these circumstances the English people took a hand in the game and Wellington got the support he needed.

Wellington had fought, through Spain and Portugal, what looked like a losing battle. He had been forced to retire to the sea, and for a time it seemed that he would be forced to sail away altogether. But this great General had a plan of his own, equal in wisdom and in genius of conception to any of Napoleon's plans. He built and fortified the immortal "lines of Torres Vedras" on the coast of Portugal.

And from these lines, in that very month of March in which Napoleon's little son was born, he began the march forward which was to win back both Portugal and Spain from the French. The news of Wellington's resistance put new heart into the Kings; it also put new heart into the peoples. The common folk of Germany and Austria and Russia, as well as the common folk of England, told each other that, at last, the "Oppressor" had met his match. They girded their loins, those peasants and working folk, to strike down the Man of the Revolution. With a thrill of joy, the Kings and the priests realized that they had forced their enemy into a position in which he appeared to be the enemy of mankind. The Kings and the priests lost no time in improving this shining hour. Their friends throughout Europe whispered in men's ears that Napoleon's grip on the trade of England was the sole cause of England's grip on the trade of Europe.

"It is his ambition and his ambition alone which is ruining you," they said, "only his ambition prevents you from obtaining the supplies of English goods which you so urgently need."

Frenchmen were tempted by the same language.

"Get rid of Napoleon," they were told, "and the world will give you peace."

France knew those accents, and the common folk of France remained loyal to their great champion. In spite

of the plotters of Rome, in spite of the promises of the Kings, in spite of the rising anger of the conquered peoples, the peasantry and the working folk stood solidly behind Napoleon, and gave to him all that they possessed—their money, their sons, their simple faith.

The Man of the Revolution girded his loins once more. Most of those who have written his story call this period the greatest of his career, but it is quite certain that he, himself, knew better. Unless he could make his peace with England (that is to say, unless he could beat England to her knees, peace being possible on no other terms), his power must be destroyed.

For Alexander of Russia was secretly getting ready to defy him, and Frederick William of Prussia and Francis of Austria were likewise standing to arms. Thousands of priests were preaching against him—the man who had dared to arrest the Pope and abolish the Spanish Inquisition—a holy war. Millions of simple folk were vowing, as the lad Staps had vowed, " death to the tyrant." By a strange irony Wellington, the most unbending aristocrat in Europe, had become the hero and the hope of countless lovers of liberty, while Napoleon, the sword of liberty, had become their fear and their foe.

Even in these circumstances Napoleon did not prohibit the sending of wheat to England.

" It is strange," says Dr. Holland Rose, " that he never sought to cut off our corn supplies . . . an Imperial decree forbidding the export of corn from France and her allied states to the United Kingdom could scarcely have failed to reduce us to starvation and surrender in the very critical winter of 1810–11. But that strange mental defect of clinging with ever-increasing tenacity to preconceived notions led Napoleon to allow, and even to favour, exports of corn to us in the time of our utmost need ; and Britain survived the strain."

Napoleon, as I have said before, was well aware, from his spies and from other sources, of what was happening in England. It is therefore simply incredible that he did

not know that bread was selling in London at 1*s.* 3*d.* for the quartern loaf, and that the Government was moving heaven and earth to obtain wheat from the Baltic. *He must have known.* And he must have known, too, how easily he could prevent the English Government from obtaining wheat.

But, as I have also said before, *it was never Napoleon's plan to inflict starvation on the common folk of any country.* He hoped and believed that the English people would recognize in him their friend—in the circumstances an illusory hope. And so, just as he had given the poor of Vienna the right to get their winter fuel in the Imperial forests, so he refrained from inflicting the pangs of hunger on the poor of London. This Man made war on Kings and princes, on War Lords and rich merchants, but not, when he could avoid it, on the helpless poor. For which reason, perhaps, there was great fear, at one time, among the rich merchants of London that "the poor" might welcome "Bonaparte" if he ever succeeded in invading England.

The same spirit which gave firewood to the Viennese and bread to the Londoners laboured without ceasing to supply the needs of the French folk whom the English blockade was depriving of so many necessities. Beetroot sugar was discovered, and the immense sugar industries of France and Germany were founded—to the great delight of one of the very few men in Europe who really possessed and honoured the scientific spirit. Chicory, too, was introduced as a substitute for coffee, and the process of making bicarbonate of soda from common salt was given to the world—in response to the offer by Napoleon of a valuable prize to the inventor.

"Chemistry," declared the Man, "will soon revolutionize commerce."

## CHAPTER LXVII

### THE CHALLENGE OF THE FLAMES

In that year 1811, while Napoleon sat at work in the Tuileries with his beloved son in a cradle beside him or actually lying on his knees, Alexander of Russia pronounced his defiance. He declared that he was no longer going to shut his harbours to English ships.

In fact, he had made a secret treaty with England—a treaty which did nearly as much as Wellington's splendid generalship to put new courage in the British War Lords. Napoleon knew exactly what this meant. If the Russian harbours were thrown open (they had never been entirely closed), then all hopes of peace with England might be abandoned. His great plan would be defeated at the very moment when it seemed likely to succeed. England would grow strong; a new Ring of the Kings would be formed; wars, more and more wars, would be forced on poor, war-weary France.

The Man, it is said, fell into profound gloom as he contemplated the news from Russia. For here, beside him, was his hope of a future full of peace and great undertakings, and there, on his frontiers, was the spectre of death. If only he could escape from the horror of a new war, and give himself wholly to his people and his child!

"Entrance to his study," says Meneval, "was forbidden to every one. He would not allow the nurse to come in, and used to beg Marie Louise to bring in her son herself; but the Empress was so little sure of her strength, when she took him from the arms of the nurse, that the Emperor, who stood waiting for her at the door, used to hasten to

meet her, take the child in his arms and carry him off, covering him with kisses. If he were at his writing-table about to sign a despatch, of which each word had to be weighed, his son, lying on his knees, or pressed against his chest, did not leave him. Sometimes he would drive away the important thoughts that occupied his mind and, lying down on the ground, would play with this darling son like another child, careful to discover what would amuse him and to avoid anything that teased him. His devotion and patience with his boy were inexhaustible."

Hope very soon gave way to despair. Alexander flatly refused to keep the promise which he had given on the raft at Tilsit and again at Erfurt. Russia, he said, was being ruined for want of the English market. Napoleon replied that Russia had the markets of Europe open to her. But he knew that this reply would not serve him. He knew that the Kings had had their "breathing-space" and were determined, once again, to try their fortunes. He knew, too, that Alexander would never forgive him for having begun the work of raising up again from the dust that Polish nation which Russia and Prussia and Austria had destroyed.

Either, therefore, he must yield or fight. And to yield was, as he saw, inevitably to sacrifice the Revolution and Democracy. For, if the Kings found him weak in one direction, they would instantly begin to press him in all directions. Hope, he felt, resided in a sudden blow which should break the power of Russia before Francis of Austria, his father-in-law, and Frederick William of Prussia, to say nothing of the smaller Kings, summoned up courage to join in the attack. Napoleon took his decision and set about making his plans. There is abundant evidence to show that he remained, all through the winter of 1811–12, in depressed spirits, in spite of his beloved boy. Whatever other people might think, he *knew* all the dangers and all the tremendous hazards which he was about to face. He made his preparations with the most scrupulous care and, by the middle of the year 1812, had placed in the field the largest army which Europe had ever

seen, an army of more than half a million men. But this was no longer the Grand Army of Austerlitz and Jena and Friedland. It was rather a mingling of many armies—Germans from the Rhine Kingdoms, Poles, Spaniards, Italians, Swiss, Dutch, even a few Portuguese as well as Frenchmen. The Man, too, had demanded that, in accordance with the treaties they had made with him, Francis and Frederick William should send him troops to guard the flanks of his army when he advanced into the heart of Russia. Those two reluctant sovereigns did not venture to refuse.

And so, on a summer's day of that fatal year, 1812, the Normandy horses and the big travelling-carriage—the same which was burned a few years ago at Madame Tussaud's fire in London—came to the great doorway of the Tuileries palace. Napoleon bade farewell to his wife and his little son. The carriage rolled away on its long journey across the smiling fields and plains of Europe.

There was a great reception at Dresden, a few days later, when Francis of Austria and his wife, all the new Kings and a whole company of princes attended the Man of the Revolution. They were gathered together, these Kings and these princes, in a vast hall, and the splendour of their uniforms and their orders was overwhelming. Each of them, moreover, was announced in all his titles. Then there fell on the assemblage a strange silence. Doors at the end of the chamber were thrown open. The voice of the usher proclaimed, "The Emperor."

Napoleon, who was dressed in that uniform of his Guard with which history is familiar, passed into the hall. Yet this "King of Kings," as flatterers called him, was still the Man of Italy.

"I hope," he wrote to his wife, "that you will soon inform me that he [his son] has cut his four last teeth. I have granted all that you asked for the wet nurse; you may assure her of this."

He found time, moreover, to send a cheering message to Josephine—to whom already, at her own request, he had introduced his precious boy.

The weather grew hot and sultry as the mighty host drew near to the frontiers of Russia. The morning of June 23, on which those frontiers, in the shape of the River Niemen (the same on which the raft of Tilsit had floated), were crossed, was filled with sunlight. Napoleon, seated on his charger, watched the crossing of the river and took the salute of his army.

Once again he had staked his all on a single throw of the dice of fate. And, at first, it seemed as if Fate would give him all that he required of her. France heard, with a new thrill of wonder, of the unending retreat of the Russians and the unending advance of Napoleon. Then came the news of the fearful victory of the Borodino and, after that, hot foot, the news that the Man had led his army into the holy city of Moscow itself. Paris rang with rejoicing, for Paris did not know the truth that, in spite of all his efforts to prevent it, the Russian Army had escaped, battered it is true, but still strong, from the clutches of the Man. Even the bloody triumph of the Borodino had not prevented the escape of the Russians.

It was this fact, and this fact alone, which filled the mind of Napoleon. For the autumn, a hot and suffocating autumn full of thunder and lightning, had arrived; already the northern nights were drawing in about his mighty host, which dysentery, and other diseases of hot weather, had reduced by more than half its strength. That knowledge of the lengthening nights had very nearly stopped his march at the town of Smolensk. When this town was reached Napoleon, for a moment, made up his mind to abandon the pursuit of the fleeing Russians and, in safe quarters, await the coming of the next spring before continuing the campaign. He told the Austrian Ambassador, Metternich, that:

"My enterprise is one of those of which the solution is to be found in patience."

Patience, it is generally agreed, might have given him victory; but against its exercise there was the great danger that Francis of Austria and Frederick William might fall upon him from behind or that some plot in Paris

might lead, in his absence, to his overthrow. In fact such a plot was hatched but came to nothing. Moreover the discipline of this great army was not the same as the discipline of the army of 1806 with which Napoleon had wintered in Poland. The French troops could be relied on; but the same could not be said of the Germans or the men of the other nationalities. To go into winter quarters might be to lose the army.

Reluctantly, therefore, Napoleon had decided on the dash for Moscow. If I take his Holy City, he told himself, Alexander is bound to ask for peace. His victory at the Borodino further flattered this hope. But the date of that battle was September 7. Time was already growing short. And, moreover, bad news had come from Spain—the news that Wellington had won there an important battle at Salamanca (July 12) and that the English troops had driven Joseph from Madrid.

The Man set his teeth and rushed on to Moscow, through the blazing heat. He was not very well—a fact which had been noted at the battle of the Borodino. But his energy never flagged and his interest in all the small and simple things of his life remained unabated. Before the great battle, for example, a portrait of his little son had reached him from Paris. He had immediately set it up, on an easel outside his tent, and allowed his soldiers to come and look at it. And then, as the guns began to boom, he had ordered it to be taken away, saying:

"He must not, so early in his life, witness a battle."

On September 14, Napoleon and his staff rode to the gates of Moscow. With a sinking heart the Man learned the ominous news that the great city, the capital of Old Russia, had been deserted by its inhabitants. "Troops, officials, nobles, merchants, and the great mass of the people were gone." Moreover all the military stores had been burned.

Did Alexander mean to resist, then, in spite of the loss of Holy Moscow? That question haunted the Conqueror's mind, for he knew that he dared advance no further into the heart of Russia. He had struck his blow:

was it possible that, this time, his blow would not achieve its object? He came to the Kremlin, the wondrous palace of the Emperors of Russia, and at that sight even his indifference to grandeur was overcome. But scarcely had he looked upon it before his eyes were drawn away to another spectacle . . . the ascent over the city of Moscow of long coils of smoke. The coils of smoke rose like the serpents from the head of Medusa and hung, poised, in the golden autumn sunlight.

"See that those fires are extinguished," he ordered sharply.

Darkness fell over Moscow and, in the darkness, winds began to stir, softly at first and then with gathering speed. Napoleon saw against the windows of the room in which he was seated the red glare of a great fire. He threw open the windows and came out on the balcony of the palace. An exclamation of horror broke from his lips. The winds had leaped from their abysses and girded themselves with light. The winds were striding over the wooden houses of Moscow, over her churches and her palaces, sowing, in that good soil, the red seed of destruction.

"The Pumps!"

"The Pumps, Your Majesty, have all been destroyed."

The officers of Napoleon's suite glanced at one another. Every man knew what that information boded. They turned to their Master and saw the lines about his mouth set hard in an expression at once proud and terrible. *Napoleon understood now why the Russians had left him an empty city.*

He understood too that these flames were the challenge of Russia to himself, the sign and symbol of a deathless resistance sustained by an unquenchable hate. Moscow burned that, in this fire, the patriotism of Russians might be proved and purged. It was to be war and not peace, war to the knife, until one or other of the combatants should succumb.

Suddenly the direction of the wind changed. The flames reared themselves and were bent anew. Like

horsemen they came, sweeping over the wooden roofs towards the Kremlin. The Man heard anxious voices about him declaring that there were 400 waggons of gunpowder in the great square of the palace, besides a huge arsenal of powder in the palace itself. . . .

" Will not Your Majesty go to a place of safety ? "

But Napoleon lingered, watching the approach of the flames as, so often, he had watched the riding of his foes against him on the fields of war. The air grew stifling; acrid smoke filled every nostril. Sparks rose in scintillating columns, pillars of fire, and were hurled across the night. . . .

" It is no longer safe for Your Majesty to remain in the palace. . . . So long as Your Majesty remains the Guard must remain also. . . ."

The Man started. He turned.

" Very well."

They came down to the courtyard and Napoleon mounted his horse. Already the fire was about the palace like a girdle. They took the way by the river out of the doomed city.

For three days and three nights the winds and the flames held carnival in the streets of Moscow and among her palaces in which some 15,000 wounded Russians had been left when the army and the people fled away.

## CHAPTER LXVIII

### THE NORTH ROAD

And then, once more, smiling autumn returned to the Russian plain and those who had fled from the burning city came back to it.

The soldiers, too, returned and, because discipline was grown lax, broke open the cellars which the fire had not reached and began to debauch themselves. Soon there were bands of drunken marauders prowling in the charred ruins, and gangs of thieves too, looting and destroying side by side with weeping women and children, homeless and distraught. For the inhabitants of Moscow were coming back. Clouds of crows and ravens, blacker than the ruins, began to settle over the city.

On September 19 Napoleon rode again into Moscow. On his brow was a great darkness and in his eyes a melancholy which forbade even his most intimate friend. Punishment, swift and terrible, fell on those who had broken discipline or given themselves to pillage. Then the Man went on foot to the foundling hospital which, by his special orders, had been guarded and saved from the flames. The old General, who was in charge of the hospital, flung himself at Napoleon's feet in an access of gratitude. Napoleon bade him rise, saying :

" Surely your children did not suppose that my troops would have devoured them ? "

That night the Man sent a messenger to Alexander at St. Petersburg proposing that peace should be made between them. But now there could be no peace. For Alexander pretended to believe that it was Napoleon himself who had set fire to Moscow and he declared that

never, in any circumstances, would he consent to give his friendship to such a monster.

"Napoleon or I; I or Napoleon," he cried. "We cannot rule side by side."

And so, while the Man of the Revolution sat in the Kremlin gazing towards the winter and waiting, the man with a guilty conscience discovered a new, infinitely satisfying way of setting himself right with himself and with the world. The memory of the father's death should, he resolved, be blotted out for ever by the memory of the son's achievement. A less intelligent observer than Alexander could see that Napoleon had no choice now but to retire before the winter descended and overwhelmed him—for there was no fodder for his horses in Moscow, and the Russian Army remained strong enough to attack him. Napoleon, in retreat, would be a new spectacle for Europe, and unless he retreated quickly the winter would be joined to his enemies. Then the horsemen of Russia would have their great opportunity. Alexander saw himself already proclaimed and acknowledged as the Saviour of Europe.

And so Napoleon's proposals for peace were left unanswered and the Man in the Kremlin sat, through the long days and nights, tasting the bitterness of death. And the days passed, those precious days of autumn sunshine which separate summer from winter, and the nights grew longer on the Russian plain. To-morrow, or to-morrow, or to-morrow, if peace was not made, it would be necessary to turn back.

I confess that that spectacle of Napoleon in the palace of the Tsars, amid the charred ruins of Moscow, hoping against hope and, like a gambler, staking his hope against inexorable Time, has moved me deeply. For everything of his and of the Revolution's was thrown on this chance, all that he was, all that he had accomplished, his faith, his strength, his vision.

It is easy to blame him; it is easy to say that he should not have gone to Moscow in the first instance or, having gone, should have retired from it within a day or

two. But those who speak in that way forget the cause of Napoleon's coming to Russia. He had come to Russia to force England to make peace with the Revolution. Unless Alexander could be compelled to break off his relations with England all hope of peace might be abandoned for good. *To leave Moscow without having made peace was to condemn France to everlasting war.*

And so he lingered on through the first week of October and through the second week, restless, gloomy, dangerous, and yet, at times, giving himself up to fits of a strange hilarity. And still the suns of autumn bathed the Russian plain in genial warmth.

Alexander meanwhile was dressing himself in the shining armour of a patriot. He had settled his accounts with all his enemies, and notably with Sweden, of which country Napoleon's old Marshal, Bernadotte, the husband of Désirée Clary, Joseph's sister-in-law, was now, thanks to Napoleon, who had named him for the honour, the Crown Prince. Crown Prince Bernadotte hated his former master (it is said because his wife could never forgive herself for not having married Napoleon), and promptly made advances to Alexander.

"I know Napoleon," said this fellow, "and I know where his strength lies. Now, at Moscow, he is in a trap."

This was the language which Alexander delighted to hear, and he and Bernadotte became friends at once. Then the Russian fleet was sent off for safety to England in case things went wrong after all. Peace had been made, too, with the Turks. The moment for action had come. On October 18 the Russian Army made a sudden attack on the French outposts. A battle, on the small scale, ensued and Murat, King of Naples, Caroline's husband, who was in command of the French, was defeated and forced to fall back towards Moscow. That event decided Napoleon, and the next morning the "Retreat from Moscow" began.

It began in sunshine, with laughter and rejoicing; for the soldiers were well fed and they had gathered much loot among the ruins. They were off home again, having

taken the Imperial City and beaten the Russians. There were marching songs to cheer the going and comrades told each other that this year they would keep Christmas in France. Napoleon, watching them file away, shared none of their illusions. Now, finally and definitely, he had failed. His system of forcing England to make peace could scarcely survive this failure. Alexander had lost his city but had regained his freedom of action. Tomorrow Frederick William of Prussia would stand again by Alexander's side. Would Francis of Austria also join the new Ring of the Kings, in spite of the fact that Marie Louise was his daughter?

Napoleon left Moscow on October 20, 1812, and the day after he went forth from the city a terrific explosion shook it. The Kremlin, which had been undermined, was blown up. Napoleon had ordered that destruction and he has been severely blamed for so doing. Those who blame him seem to forget that the Kremlin, in addition to being a palace, was a citadel and an arsenal, containing then nearly half a million pounds of gunpowder. What General in his senses would have left to his enemies this immense store of ammunition with which to destroy him? Only a few weeks before, by Napoleon's orders, the Old Guard, at the risk of their lives, had saved the Kremlin from the fire which the Russians lighted. Alexander had chosen war instead of peace. He could not, in these circumstances, expect any other treatment than that which he received.

The situation was desperate, and the Man knew that it was desperate. For the Russian Army was assembled on his left to oppose, as far as possible, a retreat which, already, the weakened discipline of the French Army endangered. Napoleon intended to take the great new road to the south and so avoid the dreadful necessity of retracing his steps over the northern road by which he had come—that road of battlefields and burned villages, of naked lands and unburied corpses, of crows and vultures and wolves, of horror and of death. But the Russians offered him battle on the South Road and, though Prince

Eugène, Josephine's son, managed to beat off their vanguard, it was certain that a fearful slaughter must ensue if the challenge was accepted. The Man saw himself, even supposing that he defeated the enemy, retiring with an additional 15,000 or 20,000 wounded on his hands.

And so he hesitated during a whole day, gazing at his map, while, it is said, his face remained set like the face of death. His generals were consulted, and then he took his decision. He would not fight; the Retreat, after all, must follow the North Road. Fournier, who will not be accused of undue sympathy for Napoleon, says that the circumstance which led to this resolve was "the care of the wounded for whom, since the beginning of October, Napoleon had shown marked consideration in all his plans."

It was October 26, a week from the day on which the army had left Moscow singing its songs and bearing its trophies and its plunder. Suddenly, when the news went round that the march was to be by the North Road, a chill fell on the spirits of the soldiers. These men, who had rushed through the blazing September days towards Moscow, saw, as in a flash, a more terrible return. Dysentery and typhoid fever, to say nothing of the Russian guns, had, as has been said, destroyed, during the advance, nearly half of the Grand Army. Would the other half be able to withstand, in addition, the frosts and snows of November on that bare and blood-soaked road?

Napoleon bade his men steel their hearts. He put the baggage of his army in the centre and gave the task of guarding the rear to Marshal Davoust. The Old Guard marched in the van. And so, in three days, and under summer skies, the army came to the battlefield of the Borodino—the same on which Napoleon had set up the portrait of his little son for his soldiers to see.

There were 50,000 unburied corpses still lying on the battlefield, and, as the army approached, clouds of carrion birds rose from their hideous feasting and wolves shrank away to await the time of the resumption of their carnival. The birds, flapping above the battlefield, uttered

horrible cries and the heavy sound of their wings was like an omen of death. The shattered regiments gazed on this scene with nameless and unspeakable horror, and when the camp fires were lighted on the frozen ground the soldiers crouched over them, scarcely daring to look about them. Green eyes of wolves reflected the light of the fires from the surrounding darkness.

But still, by day, the sun shone brightly, and still the open plain, hardened by the night-frosts, made easy going. The enemy, too, kept at a respectful distance. The pace of the Retreat was quick and its disorder not greater than had been anticipated.

But on November 6 the wind changed and the thermometer sank down. Tiny flakes of snow began to fill the air. . . .

The snow is but a thin powdering as yet on the hard ground and the soldiers scarcely heed it; but when at night they would light their fires it is not so easy to light them. And the wind has come, driving the snowflakes before it. Where shall they find fodder for the horses? Where shall food for themselves be found? . . .

On this night, and on the days and nights which followed, the army of Napoleon, that sword of the Revolution which he had formed and tempered, was broken in pieces. Strong men besought Death in their prayers that he would come to them swiftly. Men fought like wolves for a crust of bread. "Our small stock of provisions was consumed, the horses dropped dead with hunger and exhaustion and were greedily devoured by the men. Whoever wandered aside in quest of food fell into the enemy's hands."

Napoleon, on those days, marched on foot with his men, and the strong spirit which had sustained him in the Egyptian desert sustained him again in the desert of snow, in spite of the terrible news which, almost hourly, reached him of fresh dangers and fresh disasters. Already, in four weeks, 50,000 of the 100,000 men whom he had led out of Moscow were lost in the awful blizzards. Forty thousand horses, too, had fallen, and those which remained

could scarcely raise themselves from the ground. That mighty force, at the sound of whose marching all Europe had trembled only a few weeks before, where was it? Where now were the heroes of Italy, of Marengo and Austerlitz and Jena and Friedland? Could it be that these figures of despair were the soldiers of France and of the Revolution? Napoleon, alone in his bivouac, in a wooden shed, with his map on his knees, bent his head and wept. And the soldiers who beheld him, in spite of all their sufferings, were filled with pity. It is recorded that again and again men offered logs of wood, on which their very lives depended, that the Man might not lack for a fire.

But if the French were suffering horribly, the Russians, who pursued them, were suffering also. These Russians, clad in furs, well fed, and marching through a friendly country, lost indeed, wounded and missing, in a month, 160,000 out of 200,000 men. There were only 40,000 Russians left, by the middle of December, to carry on the pursuit. Long before that time Napoleon's army had been again reduced by half.

When the middle of November came the Man had not more than 25,000 men left out of his army of 500,000 men. Only one man in every twenty remained alive. And those who lived, in what state were they? Night after night, more and yet more of the bivouac fires went out before morning, and those who crowded round these dead fires, which no one had the strength to replenish, fell back into the snow. As many as 300 corpses were counted around one of the fires. And day after day the empty ranks lost, to despair and exhaustion, men whose strength and courage were as the strength and courage of gods. Even the Old Guard began to waver. Napoleon marched among the Guard and spoke to them as he marched:

"You see the disorganization of my army. By some unfortunate infatuation most of the soldiers have thrown away their arms. If you follow their dangerous example there is no hope left. Upon you depends the salvation of the army."

His guardsmen rallied round him, and well it was that they did so. For ahead of them lay the greatest danger of all: the River Beresina, held now by the enemy.

That river had been frozen. But to the horrors of frost and snow were to be added the equal horrors of a thaw. Suddenly the north wind ceased to blow and the cold was changed to warmth. The ice-bound streams began to stir again between their banks. Then it was realized that the pontoons and bridging materials had been left behind! The position of that ragged, wretched, starving, broken army was terrible, beyond the power of exaggeration. But its leader lost nothing of his courage or his skill.

"He looked pale," said one of his companions, "but his face was calm, and nothing in his appearance betrayed his mental anguish."

He set a trap for the enemy and lured him away from the place where he meant to bridge the river. The Russians fell into the trap. On November 27 Napoleon watched the remnants of his army begin to file across the bridges which his brave engineers had constructed. At midday he himself crossed, surrounded by the Guard. After the army came another "army" of stragglers and fugitives, even women and children, who had actually followed the French from Moscow and from the stricken villages in the hope of obtaining food or escaping the Cossacks. This second "army," when serious fighting began, rushed in panic to the bridges—which, during the whole of the previous night, had remained unused. There were soldiers on the bridges, for Napoleon was determined to hold the enemy off until his whole army had crossed. Fearful scenes of confusion and horror followed. But these were as nothing to the scenes which occurred, the next day, when the rearguard of the army crossed and then—as was absolutely necessary—set the bridges on fire. All those stragglers, men, women, and children, who remained on the far bank of the river, were either butchered by the Russians or killed by the cold.

Nevertheless, thanks to the genius of Napoleon and to

the transcendant heroism of his immortal Marshal, Ney, the passage of the river had been achieved. What remained of the army had been plucked out of the jaws of death. None but Napoleon, perhaps, could have carried through that mighty effort.

And now only one hope remained—the obtaining of reinforcements. Unless new troops could be brought to the succour of this shattered remnant, France and the Revolution were doomed. The Man decided that the moment had arrived when he must rush to Paris and raise a fresh army. Again, as always, he has been blamed for this decision. He should have remained, his critics declare, and spent the winter with his men. Had he done so the utter collapse of France would have taken place during that winter. It was in Paris, and in Paris alone, that Napoleon could hope to remedy the disaster which had befallen him, build up a new resistance, and overawe the Kings who were, even then, making ready to devour the last remnants of his army. Fournier has written :

"Napoleon, at this crisis, has been blamed for deserting his army, an accusation even more unjust than when he left the Egyptian expedition. He was Emperor, and could command his army or not as he thought good, and consequently could resign his command when he wanted. He was better able to succour his shattered army by hurrying on before it to Paris than by remaining behind."

On the night of December 6, with the thermometer standing at 24 degrees below zero—for frost had succeeded again to thaw—Napoleon informed his Marshals of the decision which he had taken. The command of the army was handed to Murat, King of Naples, with orders to withdraw it as quickly as possible into Poland.

"As soon as I can," said the Man, "I will come back to you with a new army. Meanwhile support one another and faithfully obey your new commander."

Napoleon then embraced each of the noble warriors who had suffered with him through the last awful weeks and to whose heroism and endurance, as well as to his own

surpassing generalship, he owed it that any of them had emerged alive. He entered a sleigh with five companions and was immediately driven away.

A journey of infinite peril lay before him, for already the country was infested by Russian horsemen, those terrible Cossacks who had wrought such great havoc on his retreating army. That night he, and his escort of a hundred Polish Lancers, passed the camp-fires of a body of Cossacks ! All through the night and all through the next day they galloped, Napoleon keeping his face concealed from watchful eyes. On the next night the thermometer fell to 30 degrees below zero, and the horses of the escort, which had been insufficiently rested, began to stagger. Before morning fifty of the hundred troopers had fallen behind.

But still the Man pressed forward, urged by a will which bent before no obstacle and sustained by a courage which nothing was able to daunt. On December 10 he reached Warsaw and put up at a modest hotel in the suburbs. One of his suite went in search of the French Ambassador, de Pradt, and brought him, secretly, to Napoleon.

" From the sublime to the ridiculous," declared the Man with a smile, " there is, as you see, but a step." Then the smile vanished from his lips as he added : " Who has not suffered reverses ? It is true that nobody has hitherto endured reverses quite so great, but perhaps it is in keeping that my misfortunes should be proportioned to my fortunes. They will speedily be repaired."

De Pradt brought to the hotel the principal Polish Ministers, and these Napoleon addressed in brave words, assuring them that Poland would not be abandoned by him and urging them to give help to his broken army and to await his return with the new army he was about to create.

The ministers retired. The sleigh came to the door and once more the journey was resumed to Dresden. The Man might rest now, for the chief dangers—they included two attempts at assassination which were foiled before being

put into execution—lay behind him. At Dresden, after an interview with the King of Saxony, and after writing a confident and even cheerful letter to his father-in-law, Francis of Austria, Napoleon bade farewell to the sleigh and with his companions entered a carriage. At midnight on December 18 the travellers reached Paris.

Marie Louise, who had been warned in advance by a special messenger, was waiting to receive her husband.

## CHAPTER LXIX

### GENERAL BONAPARTE

The next morning Napoleon met his ministers and set about fulfilling his promise to his soldiers. He learned that England had a new enemy now in America, who had declared war on her, and he must have realized that, had peace been won at Moscow and the awful catastrophe of the Retreat from that city been avoided, all that he had hoped for would certainly have been granted him. England, with an American war on her hands, must, assuredly, have made peace with a triumphant France.

Now that France stood, stripped of her power and nearly defenceless, the hope of peace had utterly vanished away. Napoleon therefore prepared for war and his fierce and sleepless energy called, in the space of three months, an immense new army into being. He, who in December had seen his power well-nigh destroyed, appeared, in March, re-armed and formidable, before an amazed and affrighted Europe.

"I desire peace," he declared. "It is necessary to the world. Four times, since the rupture which followed the Treaty of Amiens, I have solemnly proposed it. Nevertheless I shall never make any peace which is not honourable and in conformity with the greatness of my Empire. There is no mystery about my course of policy. I have made known the sacrifices which I am willing to make.

"So long as this maritime war shall last, my people ought to be ready to make any species of sacrifice; for a bad peace would involve us all in destruction—deprive us even of hope and compromise the fortunes of our descendants.

"America has taken up arms for the purpose of enforcing respect to the sovereignty of its flag. She has the good will of the world in the glorious struggle in which she has engaged. . . . America will have deserved well of all nations. Posterity will say that, the Old World having lost its rights, they were restored to it by the New."

The challenge to Britannia was not a whit less bold now than it had been in the years of prosperity. His ministers and his advisers might beg Napoleon to make peace at any price, to "sacrifice a little to gain much," they might urge that, in view of the Retreat from Moscow, France must be prepared to conduct "deals" with the Kings—the Man would have none of these councils. Those who had seen in him a cunning diplomat, a clever self-seeker, realized with a shock of amazement that they had formed a wholly false impression. Napoleon, on the contrary, was a patriot, a man of one idea, unbending, utterly determined. He would yield nothing. Nor did hints that, by trimming his sails, he might secure his throne, affect his attitude in the slightest degree. With a kind of horror, the people who owed their fortune to his genius and his power, realized that he was about to add his throne to the stakes which he was piling up. Everything that he possessed, his crown, his glory, his very life would, in the last issue, they began to perceive, be cast into the scales against the Kings.

In face of this "madness," as they called it, weak hearts began to quail and small ambitions grew profoundly uneasy. Napoleon, on the contrary, remained calm and cheerful. In no circumstances whatever would he sacrifice the Revolution to his own or to any one else's personal interests. People such as Talleyrand might say that, now, "The Emperor of the French should become the King of France," but their wisdom counted for nothing. Napoleon was absolutely determined never to be "King of France," in the sense in which Talleyrand used that title. He would not yield up the new frontiers of France, the Alps and the Rhine; he would not consent to see the Kings securing once more "stepping-stones" against his

country. Better to fall as Emperor (that is to say, as the upholder of the new frontiers), than to stand as King (that is to say, as the ruler of a France cribbed, cabined, and confined by her enemies).

The New Frontiers were the frontiers of the Revolution. They made France safe; they made her strong; they made her formidable—just as the narrow seas make England safe and strong and formidable. The Old Frontiers were the frontiers of the old Kings—mere lines drawn on the map. They would impose on France, now, as in past days, the burden of ever-present danger and ever-threatening darkness. Let an Englishman consider for a moment the effect, on our own national life, of handing over the county of Kent to France or the county of Durham to Germany!

It was the seizing and holding of the great "natural frontiers"—the mighty Alps and the broad Rhine—which had, in the first instance, secured life and hope to the Revolution and saved it from the Kings. All Napoleon's victories, all his efforts, had been directed to the securing of those "Frontiers of the Revolution," just as all the efforts of the Kings had been directed to snatching away these frontiers from the Revolution and from its leader. The Natural Frontiers were the sign and symbol of the power of the Man and of the Revolution which he served. They were the visible and substantial expression of the new Nationhood of France and of the ideals for which the French people had fought, with such desperate and such unflinching heroism, against a whole world of enemies. To give up the Natural Frontiers would be treason not only against France but against the common folk of Europe, of all whom—though they knew it not—France was the champion. It would be to acknowledge that the rights of Kings are above the rights of Man. For the Revolution, deprived of its Natural Frontiers, would be an easy prey of the Royal wolves and vultures.

There is the true explanation of Napoleon's "madness" and of his "boundless ambition." His critics are certainly right when they say that, had he been prepared to

sacrifice the Natural Frontiers he might have reigned as "King of France"—for a time at least. But they err, as certainly, when they suggest that nothing but greed of power prevented him from making that sacrifice. Once before, in his career, Napoleon had been compelled to choose between the French Revolution and his own welfare—when Paoli endeavoured to win him over to the cause of the King of England in Corsica. Napoleon had preferred, then, to see the utter ruin of all that he and his family possessed to seeing the Revolution betrayed and abandoned.

And not once, since then, had he departed from that attitude of spirit. What he had done in Corsica, when the stake was a couple of small houses and a mulberry plantation, he was about to do again when the stake was the throne of France and her crown. And so, while others doubted and feared and made ready to save themselves by playing traitor, this Man remained serene and self-secure. Now, as formerly, his duty was plain before him. He would eat, not the bread of palaces, but the soldiers' bread; he would seek, not his own, but the Revolution's. With a gesture which struck dismay into self-seeking hearts, he announced his intention of fighting the new campaign as "General Bonaparte" and not as the Emperor Napoleon, and he appointed his wife, Marie Louise, Regent during the period of his absence. That gesture told friend and foe alike that there would be no compromise with the Kings. It declared Napoleon's unshakeable resolve to maintain the Natural Frontiers of the French people or to suffer the utter ruin of his power.

I confess that I love to contemplate it. I confess that, in the whole pageant of modern history, there is no gesture which appeals to me with equal force. If, at this supreme hour, Napoleon had been careful to save his throne and his House, and so had founded a royal dynasty in France, his name would doubtless have gone down to the future as a wise and prudent man. But the spirit of the Revolution, of Democracy, which is the living spirit of this Twentieth Century, must have suffered a darker

eclipse than that which actually befell it. It was the spectacle of that lonely, desolate figure on the rock of St. Helena, as much as the spectacle of the mighty warrior, girded with victory, which helped to accomplish in the hearts of men the miracle of a new world founded on man's right to possess his own soul even against Kings and princes and priests.

Napoleon may have known, dimly, as he set forth from St. Cloud on April 15, 1813, to take command of his new armies, that, be the issue favourable or unfavourable, the Revolution was safe now against any change of fortune—safe for the future years if not for the years lying immediately ahead. But that knowledge certainly was not shared by any of those who surrounded the "Man of Destiny." Poor Josephine, in her retreat, found the cards growing more and more unfavourable and realized with dismay that the figures of the year 1813, when added together, make 13. Marie Louise, too, who had grown as fond of her husband as she was capable of being fond of any one, experienced lively anxiety. She actually hung on Napoleon's neck, as he took final leave of her, and she wrote to a friend:

"I hope that my son will make, some day, as his father does, the happiness of all who know and approach him."

## CHAPTER LXX

### "AN ABYSS COVERED WITH ROSES"

THE Grand Army, as Napoleon now knew, had gone to pieces utterly and irretrievably among the snows of Poland during the weeks after he had given up the supreme command. As an army it had ceased to exist; but of the scattered remnants he hoped to be able to create the skeleton of a new force. All his efforts were bent to the accomplishment of this task.

There was not a day to be lost, for Alexander of Russia and Frederick William of Prussia were now driving the French stragglers before them through Germany. The Retreat from Moscow was becoming—surely and swiftly—the March to Paris.

The Man completed his preparations and went thundering to Mayence where his new armies awaited him—armies but half trained and sadly lacking in cavalry and guns. With these raw recruits he must face the boiling patriotism of all Germany, of the nations as well as of the Kings. He did not hesitate for an instant—for to hesitate was to invite his father-in-law, Francis of Austria, to join the Ring against him.

And the God of Battles delivered his foes into his hand. Seventeen days after he left Paris, Napoleon, with his army of beardless boys, defeated the veteran troops of Russia and Prussia. A fortnight later he inflicted on these same troops another and a greater humiliation. A world which "could scarce forbear to cheer" learned the names of the battles of Lutzen and Bautzen, and Lord Byron declared that, barring accidents, he would "back Napoleon against the field."

This last battle had been almost a victory on the mighty scale of Austerlitz. But the want of cavalry, and an excess of caution on the part of Marshal Ney, that most glorious hero of the Russian Retreat, "the bravest of the brave," had allowed the beaten foe to escape. A truce was asked for by the Kings and granted by Napoleon who thus, in his own opinion given at St. Helena, committed the greatest mistake of his life.

For had the war been continued the Kings would inevitably have been forced to make peace. Unhappily Napoleon was nearly as much in need of rest as were his enemies—for his army of boys was utterly exhausted. These brave lads were not the seasoned and hardened troops of the days of glory. Moreover the Man of the Revolution still believed that his father-in-law would not join his enemies. *The truth, on the contrary, was that it was a hint from Francis of Austria that he would not be fully ready to fight before the end of June which, with their own evil plight, had made Alexander and Frederick William so anxious to secure a breathing-space. While Napoleon buoyed himself with hopes of a permanent peace the Kings were busy sharpening their swords.*

And to the Kings, thus engaged, there came in the month of July news of an overwhelming victory secured by Wellington over King Joseph of Spain. On the field of Vittoria (June 21), Napoleon's brother had lost his crown. The British troops were marching through Spain to invade France.

Napoleon also got that news, which meant that all hope of obtaining troops from Spain might be abandoned for ever. And he was learning, at the same time, that his marriage with Marie Louise—which he was afterwards to call "an abyss covered with roses"—had not, after all, secured him against the hatred of her father. Francis of Austria had joined his enemies. The combined armies of Russia and Prussia and Austria were making ready—as soon as the truce expired—to strike him down. The combined armies of England and Spain were already approaching the southern frontier of France. Hope faded

and gave place to utter despair in every heart except that of Napoleon himself. The determination of this man of iron, on the contrary, was not shaken even in the smallest degree. To every proposal that he should yield on the vital question of the frontiers of France and the "stepping-stone" states, he returned a proud and even contemptuous refusal.

"Do they want me to dishonour myself?" he demanded.

The war began again on August 11. On the 26th of that same month, at Dresden, Napoleon smote his massed enemies hip and thigh. But the weakness of his own army prevented him, once again, from following up his victory, the full extent of which he certainly did not at first realize:

"Had he had the faintest suspicion," says Fournier, "of the dejection in the Allies' camp, of the bad spirit shown by the Austrians, of the disorder of the retreat, of the inextricable confusion in the marching of the columns, of the danger of their being annihilated . . . he would not have lost a moment in completing his victory by a sudden and crushing blow."

But to these triumphs disasters were fated, soon, to succeed. September brought fresh help to the enemy and fresh trouble to Napoleon. In October Wellington invaded France from Spain, and in that same month, at Leipzig, in a battle which lasted during three successive days, Napoleon himself suffered a decisive defeat. Leipzig has been called "The Battle of the Nations." It was at Leipzig that some of the German troops serving in the French Army went over to the enemy. It was of Leipzig that Napoleon declared, a few months later, "If I had had 30,000 rounds [of ammunition] at Leipzig, I should to-day, be master of the world." The ammunition of the French Army ran short during the battle.

After the third day of the Battle of Leipzig it became evident to the Man that he must order a retreat. He

gave the order and then—for his army had by no means been routed—fell asleep, utterly exhausted.

"They had brought him a wooden stool," says a witness of the scene, "and worn out by the exertions of the last few days, he fell asleep. His hands, loosely clasped, rested on his lap, and he looked, at that moment, like any other mortal man bowed by bitter adversity. His Generals stood round the watchfire gloomy and silent, and a short distance off the retreating troops marched past."

On November 2 Napoleon led his army back to Mayence and the Rhine. It was reduced—that gallant army—to about 90,000 men from the half million which it had numbered only a few months before. Worse still, a terrible outbreak of typhus fever was raging in the town. The Man laboured day and night to secure for the sufferers good conditions and good treatment. And then, when he had fully accomplished this work, he set out, at the gallop, for Paris.

The Rhine, the Natural Frontier of France, "the Frontier of the Revolution," was in danger!

## CHAPTER LXXI

### THE LION OF FRANCE

Napoleon returned to Paris to demand yet another new army—for France herself was now in danger. It was a fearful demand to make to a land which had been at war for twenty years and had, in the last year, lost more than half a million men in Russia and Poland and Germany and Spain.

But France, grand, heroic, wonderful, gave the Man of the Revolution the right to ask for all that he required. A new "call-up" was sanctioned, and in every village of the Motherland patriots girded themselves. But there was no time to gather the needful forces together. On New Year's Day of the year 1814 the troops of the Kings crossed the Rhine and entered France. At last, the citadel itself, from whence had proceeded all the thunders of war, was laid open. Napoleon knew that he must strike at once with what forces remained at his disposal. With no more than 50,000 men he rushed to stay the march of 200,000.

That campaign is still the miracle of miracles, and still even to read of it is to experience the quickening of every pulse. Soldiers, from Wellington himself onwards, have called it the supreme example of the soldiers' craft. Then, in his nakedness and his defeat, the world beheld the true Napoleon, he of the great heart and the great courage, the Man of faith, who knew not any repining. . . .

The snows are drifting over France and her fair face is darkened under threatening clouds. Through her villages go marching the despoilers, greedy of her life, Russians and Prussians, Austrians and Germans, Swedes

and men of the Baltic shores, a mighty host, the avenging armies of the Kings, the cohorts of the Old World about to trample the New World into the reeking mud. And Britannia is holding all the seas for the Kings. Against that multitude is ranged but a handful of half-trained boys, and the remnants of a great army. But the Man of Battles is with them. . . .

He has come again from Paris, in these bitter January days, to struggle alone against the Kings, and now the load of care has passed from his brow and the load of doubt from his mind. He has not erred in his deep knowledge that between the Old and the New there can be no compromise, that blue blood has no truce with the blood of common men. Through the years these Lords of the Kingdoms of Europe have pursued, with their unquenchable hate, the spirit of the Revolution. To-day their hearts are uplifted in the contemplation of Victory. . . .

I think that, as he rides among his soldiers, Napoleon's eyes are bright. Let the Kings achieve their very worst; even so, it shall not avail them. For already the world is full of the song of freedom which shall make it whole against all the strength of Kings and cunning of priests. Shall men forget the days when a man, whose soul was lifted up with the new faith, so wrought that Kings and priests must bend the knee before the common folk? Let the Kings triumph; they shall not the less, in their hour of strength, hear the marching of the men of faith, the soldiers of France and of Napoleon? Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, aye and Moscow too and Dresden and the Marne—the Marne—in these names shall liberty be justified and lifted up. . . .

And so the Man fares forth unafraid against the night of his eclipse. He, and his young lads, shall smite the Kings again, and again and once again, striking terror and confusion in these swollen ranks. They shall sweep, as on the wings of eagles, from post to post, from battlefield to battlefield; strength shall be given them to achieve as never before men have achieved and to conquer as never before men have conquered. . . .

First it is Brienne, that Brienne to which the little lad of nine years came, so long ago, as a timid scholar scarce able to speak a word of French. Napoleon and his boys defeated the Prussians there on January 30. The next day they suffered defeat themselves, but rallied enough to continue the unequal struggle. Then followed four victories in quick succession—Champaubert, Montmirail, Château-Thierry, Vauchamp—the rout of the Prussians and discouragement and dismay among the Kings. . . .

For a moment Napoleon dares to breathe himself. Surely, after this miracle, deliverance cannot be withheld. His thoughts rush towards those he loves:

"Never," he writes to his friends in Paris, "let the Empress and the King of Rome [his son] fall into the hands of the enemy. My own feeling is that I had rather see my son murdered than educated at Vienna as an Austrian prince, and I have a sufficiently good opinion of the Empress to be convinced that she would share my opinion as far as a wife and mother could share it. . . . Avoid saying anything that might lead her to believe that I would consent to be protected by her father."

The breathing-space lasts but a few days and then, once more, the hunters have rallied their broken forces and are again in pursuit of the lion of France. There are two more battles, indecisive as to their result, and Napoleon draws off his shattered, exhausted army for a last, desperate spring. But his enemies are able, now, to measure the whole extent of his weakness. Even their faint hearts are filled with boldness. They turn away from him. The March on Paris begins.

Napoleon rushes to save his capital. But he is too late. On the way to Paris the news comes to him that his wife and son have left the city—acting on the advice of his brother Joseph—and that the Generals ordered to defend it have made surrender.

The Kings have seized their prey.

## CHAPTER LXXII

### THE PATH OF DUTY

When that news reached him, Napoleon fell back to Fontainebleau—the palace of his glory, the palace where, only a few months before, he had actually held the Pope himself prisoner.

Now the ante-rooms, once so crowded, are deserted and empty. All the worshippers of the Rising Sun have gone to the Kings in the Capital, to which, already, King Louis XVIII, is hastening. Away with the Revolution and the Man of the Revolution! Away with the rule of the common folk. Blue blood has triumphed over red blood and the "Glittering Beings" are once again on the march to Versailles. Napoleon saw and understood. "Let us go on fighting," he cried to those of his Generals who remained. "France is yet loyal to the Revolution and she has great resources."

But his Generals, full of their great possessions, had had enough of soldier's bread. Marmont, the friend of Napoleon's young manhood, handed over the army, secretly, to King Louis. Marmont's eyes and those of nearly all the others, were set, already, on the palace of the new King. One by one they took their leave—one by one, and even, at the last, Berthier, the Chief of Staff, Napoleon's right hand.

"I will return," said this man whom the fallen Emperor had loaded with honours and riches.

"Berthier will not return," said Napoleon in tones of infinite sadness, when his old friend had gone away.

There were comings and goings between Fontainebleau and Paris and then, because the army, what was left of it,

had been betrayed by Marmont to the Kings, Napoleon consented to abdicate. On April 11, 1814, he wrote :

" The Allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon was the only obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that he renounces for himself and his heirs the thrones of France and Italy, because there is no personal sacrifice, even were it of life itself, which he is not ready to make to the interests of France."

" I abdicate," he said to a friend, " but give away nothing."

Not once had he faltered ; he was beaten, but his enemies had obtained no concession from him. There is a story that on the night of his abdication he tried to commit suicide. It is a tale which lacks conclusive evidence in its support ; and those who tell it are not agreed among themselves—always a suspicious circumstance. Napoleon may have been " sick unto death," but, as Fournier says, his " sickness had entirely disappeared by the next day." Moreover he declared to a friend, as if excusing himself for not doing what he is said to have done :

" A death which I could only gain by an act of despair would be cowardice. Suicide is neither in harmony with my principles nor with the rank which I hold in the world."

He also declared :

" People will blame me for surviving my downfall, and wrongly. I see nothing noble in ending my life like a gambler who has lost his money."

There, I think, is the true Napoleon. He was not, nor did he feel, like " a gambler who had lost his money." His loss was a small thing to him and gave him, apparently, small concern, for even his worst enemies say that he was calm and cheerful in these dark days. Had he not, like the Apostle, fought the good fight, kept the faith and finished the work that was given him to do ? If he had not succeeded, that was the will of Providence. Besides he knew—he must have known—that his success was

immeasurably greater than his failure. He himself had lost a crown; the Revolution—Democracy—was established for ever in the hearts of Frenchmen.

Let no one, then, pity the deserted ruler in his empty and silent palace. Let no one think that Napoleon at Fontainebleau is less serene than Napoleon at Austerlitz. Fontainebleau, Austerlitz—they are but milestones on the way from the Old World to the New.

Napoleon's formal abdication was signed on April 13—a date which seemed to poor Josephine, who, at Malmaison, was receiving the marked attentions of all the Kings, and doing her best—or so her enemies say—to secure her own position, full of significance. His journey to the tiny Isle of Elba, of which he had been sarcastically created "Emperor" by the Kings, began on April 20, 1814. What remained of the Old Guard was drawn up in the great courtyard of the palace—the Court of the White Horse. Napoleon's travelling-carriage, with the Normandy horses, awaited him.

The Man was calm and never, at any time, had he looked so completely master of himself. He advanced to his beloved soldiers and spoke to them.

"Soldiers," he cried, "you, my old companions-in-arms, who have always accompanied me in the road to honour, we must at length separate. I might have remained longer among you, but to do so I should have prolonged a bitter struggle, adding, perhaps, civil to foreign war, and I could not bear the idea of longer convulsing France. Enjoy the repose you have so justly earned and be happy. As for me, do not pity me. I have a mission, and it is to fulfil that that I consent to live, and this mission is to relate to posterity the great deeds we have performed together. I would wish to clasp you all in my arms, but allow me to embrace the flag which represents you."

Napoleon them embraced General Petit, who commanded the Old Guard. He kissed the colours. The stillness of the April day was unbroken; the guardsmen stood stiffly to attention.

But the tears ran down their cheeks. The Man, whose eyes were moist, waved his hand to his soldiers. He entered his carriage which immediately drove away. And then discipline was broken.

"One heard nothing but sobbing all along the ranks," says Coignet, "and I confess I was weeping, too, when I saw my beloved Emperor leave."

## CHAPTER LXXIII

### THREE WOMEN

The Kings in Paris—Francis of Austria, Frederick William of Prussia, and Alexander of Russia—were profoundly relieved to see the last of Napoleon because there was great fear that, in spite of the fact that all, or nearly all, his Marshals had deserted him, the Army might rush to his side. The Army had not deserted Napoleon, and it was covered with shame and full of rage because its leaders had handed it over to the Kings.

Moreover, except in a few districts, the public opinion of France was all for the Man. The grandeur of his resistance to the Kings, he with his handful of lads, they with their mighty armies, had thrilled every heart and, already, stories of that immortal campaign were rousing patriots to a white heat of devotion—how the Man had contrived to be in four places at once ; how he had rushed from battlefield to battlefield ; how when, once, his troops fell back he had faced them alone, on a bridge, and by his own desperate courage rallied them. How he had shared all their hardships and all their dangers and how his bravery had uplifted all who beheld it.

There were districts of France, however, in which the friends of the " Glittering Beings " had many supporters—and notably the valley of the Rhône, Lyons, Valence, and Aix, that district in which Napoleon had served his apprenticeship to arms. It was through that district that the travelling-carriages must now pass on their way to the coast.

There were three carriages. Napoleon and General Bertrand occupied the second. The " Commissioners,"

as they were called, of the Kings—in reality Napoleon's gaolers—occupied the third. An escort of the Cavalry of the Guard rode in front for a short distance, and then retired, leaving the carriages to proceed unattended. At first crowds surrounded Napoleon's carriage, blessing him and cursing his conquerors. Shouts were raised against the "Commissioners" and threats uttered—for which Napoleon himself expressed his regrets to those gentlemen.

But when the valley of the Rhône was reached these tributes of love changed to tributes of hate. In the valley of the Rhône a "White Terror" was beginning, and murder was already afoot. Instead of cries of "Long live the Emperor!" there were yells of "Down with the Tyrant! Long live the King!" In order to avoid trouble the carriages drove through Lyons at night. But they came to Valence—that Valence of the old days, of Mademoiselle Bou, of poverty and hard work and hope—by day. Valence was not friendly. Napoleon made a stop in the town and met there Augereau, the ex-fencing-master, his old companion in arms, whom he had created Duke of Castiglione.

Augereau heaped curses and insults on the fallen ruler. This man had actually, when he heard of Napoleon's abdication, issued an address to the soldiers serving under him in which he declared his benefactor to be "a man who, having sacrificed millions of victims to his insatiable ambition, has not known how to die like a soldier."

This was meant, of course, for the eyes of King Louis, for Augereau hoped to retain his title and his fortune. Eleven months later, when Napoleon came back from Elba, the same man issued a new address to his soldiers in which he said:

"The Emperor is in his Capital! That name so long the pledge of victory has alone sufficed to disperse his enemies."

This was meant for the eyes of Napoleon.

At Valence, too, Napoleon met his brother Jerome's wife, that good woman, Catherine, the daughter of the King of Würtemberg. The King of Würtemburg, as I

have told already, had tried to separate his daughter from her husband when the star of Napoleon began to fade. But Catherine would not submit to that separation. She had escaped from her father and was now on her way to join Jerome in Switzerland. Napoleon embraced her without speaking a word.

"That mute embrace," said the noble Catherine, "was eloquent, and revealed the feelings of a hero who had been betrayed."

The farther south the carriages travelled the more angry grew the mobs which awaited them in the towns. At Avignon, where the Pope had been kept a prisoner by Napoleon for a short time, a furious crowd threatened the carriage and demanded the blood of "the Corsican." Napoleon heard these cries of hate with anguish and is said to have betrayed signs of collapse and fears for his life—but that story comes from his enemies. In any case his gaolers became alarmed for his safety—for which they were responsible—and Sir Neil Campbell, the English "Commissioner," states that Napoleon was begged to leave his carriage and to adopt a disguise.

He did this, and rode on horseback, in a plain uniform with a hat ornamented with a white cockade—a fact which, by the way, does not suggest "collapse." The Commissioners had reason to be thankful that their advice had been taken, for, at Orgon, the mob, carrying a gallows, rushed Napoleon's carriage. They found nobody in the carriage except General Bertrand, whose life might have been sacrificed had not the Russian "Commissioner," the gallant Schouvaloff, harangued the crowd in French and put their ringleaders to shame.

Meanwhile Napoleon, riding with an officer, reached the wayside inn where he meant to spend the night. An old woman, in the inn, who did not know who these travellers were, spoke to them about Napoleon and cursed his name. At that the Man is said to have burst into tears. He had passed through the danger area. He had seen both how much he was beloved and how fiercely he was detested. Augereau's brutal rudeness had wounded him ; Catherine's

nobility of soul had blessed him. So many emotions, coming so quickly, to a man worn out with incessant anxiety and superhuman effort, both physical and mental, were, apparently, more than even these iron nerves could endure.

I am inclined to believe the story of Napoleon's tears because, once, during the Great War, I saw a soldier, who had won the Victoria Cross a few weeks before, burst into tears at the sound of a banging door in a military hospital. This most brave fellow had temporarily lost his nerve as a result of the tremendous strain which he had undergone.

Napoleon crossed to Elba in a British man-o'-war, the *Undaunted.* He reached his tiny kingdom, an island about the size of the Isle of Wight, lying off the Italian coast, on May 4, 1814. The islanders, mostly fisherfolk and miners, welcomed him with rapture.

He reached Elba alone. His wife and child had not joined him, though the Kings had promised that no obstacle would be put in the way of his relatives who might wish to share his exile. Could it be, then, that Marie Louise did not wish to join her husband? . . . The months passed. There was no sign from this wife who, a year before, had been so loving. Napoleon wrote letter after letter; he sent messengers; he devised schemes. And he persuaded himself that it was the Kings who were keeping his wife and son away from him. He wrote to Francis of Austria:

"I am too well acquainted with the principles of Your Majesty, I know too well what value you attach to family ties, not to feel a happy conviction that you will hasten whatever may be the inclinations of your Cabinet and your policy, to help me in pressing forward the moment of meeting between a wife and her husband and a child with his father."

There was no reply. Nor did Marie Louise reply. The melancholy truth was that Marie Louise had already found a lover very much to her taste in the Count of Neipperg, to whose care her father had entrusted her. She

was destined to bear four children to this agreeable man and then, at his death, to replace him, in her affections, by another lover, the Count of Bombelles.

Napoleon's little son, who had cried piteously for his father when he was taken away from Paris, saying to Meneval: " M. Meva tell him that I still love him," went to Austria to be brought up " as an Austrian prince " until his death at twenty-one years of age. He was known, in his life, as Duke of Reichstadt, was forsaken by his mother and died in the palace of Schoenbrunn. He was buried in the uniform of an Austrian officer. Yet, he learned to love his father's memory, and when Napoleon died " he shed many tears."

Napoleon was not, however, left entirely desolate at Elba. His good mother, the brave Letitia, came to stay with him, and so also did his sister Pauline. Marie Walewski too, the woman who loved him, paid him a brief visit of two days' duration when she heard that he had been abandoned by his wife. She brought her son—Napoleon's son—with her.

Before that visit took place Napoleon learned of the death of Josephine from diphtheria, a month after he himself had departed from France.

## CHAPTER LXXIV

### LILIES AND VIOLETS

Napoleon in Elba remained the Man of the Revolution. He set about, on the day of his arrival, improving his new realm and busying himself with the welfare of his new subjects.

He also put the island in a state to defend itself against attack—for he had no illusions about the Kings; sooner or later he believed they would try to curb him yet further. His eyes, meanwhile, were set on France and on her conquerors. The Kings were busy doing exactly what Napoleon had always declared that they would do. France was to lose her "Natural Frontiers"; she was to be ruled by the Bourbons—by Louis XVIII, that fat and selfish prince who "had learned nothing and forgotten nothing." The common folk were to be put, as quickly as possible, in their place. Having made these preliminary arrangements the Kings retired to Vienna and began the pleasant work of dividing the spoils. Poland, unhappy Poland, was divided up once more between Francis, Alexander, and Frederick William. Frederick William received a large slice of the Kingdom of Saxony. The King of Sardinia made a mouthful of Genoa. Belgium fell to the House of Orange. The King of Sweden got Norway, in exchange for Finland, which Alexander was determined to have and to hold. The Prince Regent of England, for poor George III was now insane, kept Malta, India, the Cape of Good Hope, and, of course, Hanover—with additions. Italy was split up again and divided among the hungry pack. Napoleon's wife, Marie Louise, got her share—the Duchy of Parma, and some other crumbs

from the feast. Francis, her father, kept Venice. The Pope recovered his " kingdom in this world."

The Kings, in other words, devoured the peoples. The Poles and Italians, whom Napoleon had tried to set free, were hurried again under the yoke of their oppressors. The Revolution, Democracy, was suppressed and France was shorn of her safety. It is a depressing thought that our own country was a party to this shameless and unscrupulous settlement—a settlement which was to cause endless wars and which, finally, was to plunge unhappy Europe in the awful catastrophe of 1914. In 1914, " England and France united " were compelled, on pain of death, to return to the wise and generous plan of Napoleon and to put an end—God grant that it may be for ever !—to the power of the Kings.

Italy is a nation to-day ; Napoleon tried to make Italy a nation. The Pope, to-day, is compelled to content himself with his Heavenly power ; Napoleon tried to make him so content. Germany, to-day, lives while Prussia, with her horrible Militarism, has been curbed ; Napoleon tried to curb Prussia and to raise up Germany. Austria has been quelled and reduced ; Napoleon tried to quell and to reduce Austria. Poland has regained her freedom and her soul ; Napoleon tried to secure them for her. Belgium is independent of Holland and is the friend of France ; Napoleon tried to bring about this state of matters. The Holy Inquisition reigns no longer in Spain ; Napoleon suppressed it. England and France are friends ; that was the dream of all Napoleon's life. And the Revolution is established for ever in the hearts of the French people.

Can any man look at the work of the Kings, after they destroyed Napoleon, and at the work of Napoleon before he was destroyed, and say, honestly, that the fall of this great man was not an overwhelming disaster to mankind ? Can we, who have seen our brothers and sons torn to pieces by the greed of the Kings in those awful years 1914–1918, doubt for a moment that, when our countrymen refused to make peace with the Man, they betrayed themselves and their children's children ?

The price of Napoleon's fall was the Great War, for, when Napoleon fell, France was deliberately crippled by the Kings and Prussia encouraged to become the master of Germany. The march of Prussia towards "world power" dates not from 1870 but from 1814. Who will dispute to-day that Napoleon would have served the world well if, instead of taking some pity on the Hohenzollerns, Frederick William and his Amazon Queen, as he did, he had driven them from their throne and utterly destroyed it, as he thought of doing?

The revenges of history are slow; but they are terribly sure. By a series of adroit moves the Kings of Europe forced Napoleon to occupy the countries surrounding France. They used his victories as an excuse for calling him a tyrant; and the fact that his armies were, necessarily, spread all over Europe, for rousing the common people, whose saviour he was, against him. Thus they succeeded in stealing the patriotism of simple folk to serve as a prop for their own tottering thrones. The moment Napoleon left the stage, the common folk were treated exactly as a farmer treats the cattle on his farm—they were bought and sold with the property.

The only excuse for the Kings is that most of them were insane. George III was a decent enough man according to his lights; yet he lost America to this country and was less concerned about that loss than he was about the loss of Hanover, "his father's house." His reason gave way. His son, the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV, was a man of most unworthy character. The "Tsar Paul" was frankly insane; his son, Alexander, showed many symptoms of mental degeneration (one of which, perhaps, was his share in his father's death). Francis of Austria was sane; but a more cold and calculating man existed nowhere in Europe. Of the Spanish and Neapolitan Bourbons it is scarcely necessary to speak. The best that can be said of them is silence. The French Bourbons were but the dregs of a once-great family. Even Englishmen blushed for the Count of Artois, who had been their guest so long, when he succeeded his brother

Louis XVIII on the throne of France, as Charles X. The Hohenzollerns were sane enough, but they were war-mad, had always been so, and were destined always to be so. The ex-Emperor William II is a son of his race.

Against this background of pride and cunning and imbecility, the figure of Napoleon stands out, at once very human and very gracious. And the longer it is examined, and the closer, the more gracious does it seem. Napoleon, *in the age in which he lived*, was a moral man. He was kind in an age of great cruelty. His care of poor people and helpless people never failed, though he could be terribly severe on traitors. It is on record that he always bowed to his personal servants—thus carrying on the Corsican tradition of his boyhood. Nor was any servant, however humble, ever dismissed without his permission. Behaviour of this sort, a hundred years ago, was not only extraordinary, it was, in a King, absolutely unheard of. But the man who abolished flogging in the Services, who co-operated in the abolition of the slave trade, and who abolished the Holy Inquisition could not refrain from following, whenever possible, the dictates of a kind heart. It has often been said that Napoleon was not religious. But if "*True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world*," then the Man of the Revolution was not the godless monster he has been painted. His care of the widows and fatherless children of his soldiers is on record for all the world to read. Moreover, for the faith that was in him he braved every danger and made, ultimately, every sacrifice.

Nor is the story of death and desolation which his wars occasioned even comparable to the story of death and desolation occasioned by the so-called "settlement" of Europe which the Kings carried out after they had destroyed him. In order at long last to put Napoleon's plan into execution Europe has been compelled to suffer the wars of Italian liberation; the Crimean War; the Austro-Prussian War; the war between Denmark and Prussia; the Franco-Prussian War; and the Great War of 1914–1918.

That toll of slaughter is the final answer to the charge that Napoleon was actuated merely by vulgar ambition (as if a great-hearted people, such as the French, would ever have consented to follow a mere adventurer for twenty years and would, to this day, hold his memory in respect and affection !).

Nor was this Man the enemy of liberty as has so often been said. He was at war during the whole of his reign. When a nation is mobilized for war, as Europe knows now, the full personal liberty of peace-time is simply impossible. Napoleon organized France against the Kings and everything which he did was done to this end. Had peace come to him, Europe would have seen—and how often did he not dwell on this himself ?—a very different form of government in France. Was our own War Council of 1918 the enemy of liberty because it severely restricted the rights of every citizen to do as he chose ? Was the conscription in England, which saved us, an act of tyranny ?

Napoleon is always judged by his enemies as if he had reigned in a period of profound peace. In fact, during a bare twenty years, he commanded personally in 600 skirmishes and 85 pitched battles and, during the ten years of his actual reign, spent exactly 54 days more in his palaces than in camp in presence of the enemy ! The amazing thing is, not that personal liberty was curtailed during these years of fury, but that it was allowed to exist at all. Napoleon, in sober truth, exacted not the maximum but the minimum compatible with the safety and glory of France, and, throughout all his wars, his love of liberal culture and of science never waned. As a medical man it pleases me to think that a request for the release of an English prisoner, which had been refused by the Man, was granted instantly when Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, wrote to support it.

" What ! " cried Napoleon, " the great Jenner asks ? It is impossible to refuse anything to that man."

It pleases me, too, to contemplate the great and selfless care which this soldier always bestowed on his wounded

and the immense interest which he took in surgery and medicine. Napoleon offered a prize for an essay on diphtheria. And he wrote in his will of Larrey, the immortal head of his medical services:

"He is the most virtuous man I have known."

Pitt's plan, and not Napoleon's plan, was put into execution in 1814. It dominated Europe for nearly a century until, at long last, there mounted the throne of Britain a man possessed, in a supreme degree, of the gifts of vision and of statesmanship. King Edward VII, as all men know, loved France and trusted her, and he taught his subjects to share his enthusiasm. But he did far more than that. He created a new kind of Kingship, a Kingship strangely like that which Napoleon had tried to create. Edward VII was not so much the King of Great Britain as the King of the British People—even as Napoleon was Emperor of the French. The British people followed their King gladly and confidingly into that *entente cordiale* which was destined, soon, to be, under God, the means of breaking for ever the power of the feudal Kings, and of establishing for ever the spirit of the Revolution in Europe. It was given to King Edward to amend the rupture of the Peace of Amiens.

It was given to our beloved King George V, hand in hand with the French and Italian peoples and the mighty people of America, to save the world. To-day England owns a new Kingship—the noblest and most enduring of her history. The throne of England is founded, in sober truth, on the love of the common folk, a love which every man gives unstintedly and with all his heart, not because he is compelled to give it but because it has been, and is being, so nobly and so patiently won. Between such an England and the France Napoleon served and established there can be nothing but friendship.

I do not know if the Man at Elba, as he watched the ravening of the Kings, foresaw any of the events which have come to pass. Perhaps he did; for his vision was long beyond the vision of most mortal men. But he saw, certainly, that the soul of France had not been crushed

by her misfortunes and that her heart beat high, still, with hope and faith. And his friends brought to him the news that because France believed he would come again with the returning spring, Frenchmen and Frenchwomen everywhere were wearing violets, the flower of spring, pinned on their breasts. The violets of Napoleon, it was said, should triumph over the lilies of King Louis.

That news must have thrilled the exile with deep and wondrous joy. It decided him, once again, alone, with but his own two hands for helpers, to go forth, in the name of the Revolution, of the French People, against the Kings.

## CHAPTER LXXV

### "VIVE L'EMPEREUR!"

On the night of Sunday, February 26, 1815, Napoleon left Elba. He said good-bye to his mother and his sister Pauline and stepped on board the *Inconstant* which was ready to carry him to France. He had with him, in other ships, 1,050 men of his Old Guard who had joined him on the island. This tiny force landed on the coast of France, near Cannes, on March 1.

"I shall reach Paris," said Napoleon, "without firing a shot."

He divided his tiny force and sent a few men to Antibes to demand the surrender of that place. These men were promptly arrested and the Man found himself with even fewer soldiers than he had expected to possess. Nevertheless he continued his march to Grenoble—in order to avoid the Royalist districts where, thanks to the "White Terror" of nobles and priests, he had been so nearly murdered on his way to Elba.

The officer in command at Grenoble had already received orders to "exterminate the band of brigands." He had drawn up his soldiers across the road by which it was known the Man was coming. The soldiers—all of whom had fought under Napoleon and shared his glory—stood restless and uneasy under the eyes of their Royalist officers.

Suddenly, round a bend in the road, came the army of Napoleon—a thousand guardsmen, only one single battalion, led by one man. But the soldiers of King Louis knew those "bearskins"—the bearskins of the Old Guard, of Napoleon's guard. And they knew, too,

that small figure in the old grey coat with the old cocked hat on his head. . . . Across every Frenchman's mind rush memories glorious and sacred, of great marches and bivouacs and battles, of victory, of immortal fame. Memories of the days when France knew not the yoke of the Kings. A gasp of wonder and deep joy breaks from every soldier's lips . . .

"*There he is: fire on him!*"

The soldiers do not even turn their heads to see which of the officers of King Louis has given this order. Who are the officers of King Louis and what part have these men in the glory of France and of the Man—these men who betrayed France to her enemies? . . .

In the dead silence Napoleon advances alone, on the bare road; now he is unbuttoning his tunic; now his hands have parted the garment exposing his breast.

"Soldiers," says the well-known voice, "if there is one among you who wishes to kill his Emperor, he can do so. Here I am!"

The line wavers and then, suddenly, from a thousand throats there bursts forth that mighty challenge to Kings and princes and priests:

"*Vive l'Empereur!*"

They are about him now, his soldiers, sobbing for joy and kissing the hem of that grey coat like worshippers in a temple. They have their arms about him and they touch him as if to assure themselves that it is really he, Napoleon, their leader and their friend.

Grenoble is his now, and Lyons too, and soon Marshal Ney, who, having forsaken him, had promised King Louis to "bring him to Paris in an iron cage," will return to his old allegiance, bringing 6,000 men with him. Soon Napoleon will be carried all the hundreds of miles to Paris in the arms of the soldiers of France and with the blessings of the common folk of France ringing in his ears.

## CHAPTER LXXVI

### MEMORIES

History holds no other story to be compared with this story of Napoleon's return to Paris and to power without the firing of a single shot. Nor can all the sneers of all the Kings abate one jot of the wonder of it and the glory.

And yet the explanation is very simple. Napoleon had not betrayed France and France knew that he had not betrayed her. France knew that it was his Marshals who had handed over the remnants of her glorious army to the Kings in order to save themselves. The Man had kept the faith. And so, once again, the French people set him on the throne which the French people had given him.

And King Louis the XVIII, on March 19, fled away from Paris to Belgium. A poor woman gave the King some dinner in her cottage that night, because he was nearly friendless. King Louis himself told the story. He added :

" And an execrable dinner it was ! "

Would Napoleon have spoken in that way of that simple kindness ?

Napoleon was now again at Fontainebleau, and this time the old palace was full of courtiers—worshippers of the Rising Sun. How the Man must have scorned them ! But he showed the utmost gentleness and the utmost generosity. He scarcely uttered a complaint ; he did not even remind people of things they were trying so hard to forget. And the Paris newspapers which, a week before, had announced that the " Corsican Brigand " had dared to land in France declared now that " The Emperor and

King has arrived at Fontainebleau. His Majesty will proceed at once to his Capital," and so on.

On March 20 Napoleon, in a carriage, surrounded by officers, drove from Fontainebleau to Paris. Thousands of peasants lined the road and blessed him. The peasants almost blocked the road and the face of the Man grew soft. It was night when he reached Paris. He alighted from his carriage amid wild cheers and put his hand on the arm of his old friend Count Lavalette. So he mounted the grand staircase, " his eyes half closed, his hands extended before him, like a blind man." The same night he began to work for France and he worked all night.

He desired peace with Europe and announced his desire to all the courts of Europe. The Kings replied by declaring that he had broken a promise to themselves by leaving Elba (they did not mention that they had broken almost all their promises to him and had been, in addition, at the time of his " return," about to send him away to St. Helena or some other " safer " place). They declared him an outlaw and had the effrontery to talk of a " *Holy* Alliance " against him. Within the space of a few weeks it became obvious that Napoleon would be compelled, once again, to fight for his faith.

Meanwhile the Man had tried in vain to persuade his wife to return to him and to persuade his father-in-law, Francis, to restore him his son. The " Holy " Kings disregarded all his appeals to their sentiments as human beings. Hortense, Josephine's daughter, did the honours of the palace in Marie Louise's stead, and she and Napoleon paid an early visit to poor Josephine's grave. The Man wept when he came to Malmaison, that house of memories, in the garden of which he had taken his decision about the Duke of Enghien. He slipped his arm through that of his adopted daughter, the mother of Napoleon III, and walked again through the familiar ways " talking of her whose works greeted them from every side." Then :

" Napoleon manifested his desire to visit the chamber in which his wife had died. Hortense was about to

accompany him, but he signed her to remain and, alone, pursued his way to this well-remembered apartment which was, to him, fraught with so many tender memories. He remained a long time beside the bed in which Josephine had breathed her last, lost in reverie, dwelling upon the memory of that one who had once lived with him in intimate companionship, then he descended to rejoin Hortense, a prey to emotions which he did not attempt to conceal."

They returned to the Tuileries. Napoleon sent for the doctor who had attended Josephine.

"So, M. Horan," he said, "you did not leave the Empress during her illness?"

"No, sire."

"What was the cause of that illness?"

"Uneasiness of mind. Grief."

"What? You believe that?"

Napoleon gazed fixedly at the doctor. Then he asked:

"From what did that grief arise?"

"From Your Majesty's position last year."

"Ah! She used to speak of me, then?"

"Very often."

Here Napoleon drew his hand across his eyes which seemed filled with tears.

"Good woman! Excellent Josephine! She loved me truly, did she not? Ah, she was a French woman."

"Yes, sire, she loved you, and she would have proven it, had it not been for dread of displeasing you. She had conceived an idea. She said one day that, as Empress of the French, she would drive through Paris with eight horses to her coach, and all her household in gala livery, to go and rejoin you at Fontainebleau and never leave you more."

Napoleon wept again. He said:

"Poor Josephine! Her death, of which the news took me by surprise at Elba, was one of the most acute griefs of that fatal year, 1814. She had her failings, of course; *but she, at any rate, would never have abandoned me.*"

As Lord Rosebery has pointed out, that is the only reproach which Napoleon ever uttered against Marie Louise, of whom, in his will, he wrote:

"I have always had reason to be pleased with my dearest wife, Marie Louise. I retain for her, to my last moment, the most tender sentiments. I beseech her to watch, in order to preserve my son from the snares which, yet, surround his infancy."

Marie Louise, when these words were written, had virtually abandoned her son. She was with child to Neipperg.

Napoleon's brothers rallied to him on his return from Elba just as they had stood by him in his hour of defeat. Lucien, who had been for some years a prisoner in England (having been captured by an English ship on his way to America to escape from Napoleon's authority) was especially kind and helpful—for time had tamed him and taught him to understand his brother's greatness and honesty of purpose. Louis, too, was a brother once more. Joseph and Jerome had not ceased to be brothers. And Carnot, of the policy of "Go Slow," came to Paris and offered Napoleon his services which were gratefully accepted.

## CHAPTER LXXVII

### ALL OR NOTHING

Napoleon, for the second time, had been chosen by the French people to reign over them. But as the Kings did not admit that a People possessed the right to choose its ruler, they made ready, once more, to destroy him and to "restore" Louis XVIII to the throne of France. The English War Lords declared that they never had, and never would, "recognize" the Man as a real, genuine, blue-blooded King.

The war began within two months of Napoleon's return from Elba. It lasted exactly a week and a day—from Saturday till the following Sunday. In that week the Man smote one of his enemies hip and thigh and was by another of his enemies himself destroyed.

All the Kings were in the business, but actually only the Prussians and the English played a part; Francis of Austria and Alexander of Russia were not ready. On Saturday, June 11, 1815, Napoleon drove out of Paris behind the Normandy horses to join his army. Three days later, on the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, he came in touch with the Prussians. He rode along the lines of the army, which his wizard-like skill had recreated in a few weeks, and the soldiers greeted him with such wild joy that he held up his hand and cried:

"Not so loud, my children, the enemy will hear you."

He had already spoken to these children of his in one of his proclamations, telling them that they were about to fight not only for France but for the freedom of the Italians and the Poles and the smaller German people of whom Prussia and Austria were trying to make slaves.

" For every Frenchman of Spirit, " he had written, " the time has come to conquer or die."

The next day, Wednesday, some Royalist officers in Napoleon's army deserted to the Prussians. Whereupon the Man, who had had his suspicions of these officers, said : " A man who has been a white will never become a blue ; and a blue will never be a white."

That day, June 15, Napoleon spent eighteen hours in the saddle. Next day, Thursday, at Ligny, he smashed the Prussian Army under Blucher, the " Old Devil " who when first he saw Regent Street in London exclaimed : " What a town to sack ! " Ligny was fought in a thunderstorm. While this battle was going on, Ney, Napoleon's great Marshal, the hero of the Russian retreat, was fighting at Quatre Bras, near by, against Prussians and Dutch and Belgians and English. Quatre Bras ended indecisively. Nevertheless Napoleon was full of joy and hope, for his victory over the Prussians was signal and he had the right to believe that the campaign belonged to him. And he still thought that victory was well in sight when Wellington drew back his forces to Waterloo. Napoleon spent Friday the 17th, his second-last day of campaigning, in pursuing the English Army through floods of rain. But not before he had, himself, ridden all over the field of Ligny to give to the wounded that personal attention which he never omitted.

Night fell and Wellington's camp fires shone through the rain from the ridge of Waterloo. Napoleon, who feared that his enemy might escape him, actually went to the outposts to make quite sure that " Wellington was still there." Then he returned to sleep in a farm-house.

But he could not rest, and at one o'clock in the morning was up again and back at the outposts, gazing with anxious eyes at the bivouacs of his foe. At breakfast he declared :

" The enemy's army outnumbers ours by more than a fourth ; nevertheless we have ninety chances out of a hundred in our favour."

The weather on this fateful Sunday morning—June

18, 1815—was still very bad and the ground was unfit to carry heavy guns. Napoleon, therefore, took a short sleep after breakfast and then, when the sun began to shine, rode to the front. Once more, and for the last time, the Soldiers of the Revolution beheld the Man of France and greeted him, and, far away, the army of England heard the battle-cry of ten epic years : " *Vive l'Empereur !* "

At 11.30 the first shots were fired. . . .

At six o'clock the mighty charge of his cavalry, by which Napoleon had believed he must achieve final victory over his brave and sorely tried foes, ended in failure. Even so the Man did not despair. Just before sunset, while Wellington was praying for " Night or Blucher " (for the " Old Devil " had rallied his men, and, because Grouchy, who had been sent by Napoleon to intercept him had failed to do so, was returning to help his English allies), Napoleon resolved to stake everything on one last tremendous throw. The Old Guard, all that was left to him, the best, the bravest, should be flung at the English.

The Man, telescope in hand, took the salute of his splendid corps as it passed him on its way to join the fight. He watched the bearskins sweep across the valley and spring up the hill beyond into the English lines. He saw them pierce the lines with superb dash. Victory, it is said, flashed from his eyes at the moment when his policy of all or nothing seemed to have triumphed.

Suddenly he started :

" What ! They are in confusion ! "

The blood, says a witness (not a very reliable witness it is true), left his cheeks.

" All is lost for the present."

Napoleon tried to rally his Guard, but because the Guard was already almost destroyed, and because the Prussians, a fresh army, were upon him, could not. He sought death without finding it and then quitted the stricken field, on which his travelling-carriage was captured, in the rout of his army. At Genappe he tried to make a stand, but the Prussians, who had taken up the pursuit, were already upon him. At Quatre Bras he once more

sought to rally a few troops. Again it was useless. Tears, it is said (but by his enemies), stood in his eyes. His enemies, on this occasion, may well have been right, for the ruin was terrible beyond exaggeration.

Wellington's genius, allied to Wellington's prudence and supported by the splendid, heroic courage of British soldiers, had well served the Kings.

## CHAPTER LXXVIII

### "ALL IS NOT LOST"

"NAPOLEON," says Fournier, "who for some time past had been unable to ride any distance, however short, without pain, had, after Waterloo, to remain in the saddle till five in the morning, when Charleville was reached and a carriage procured which took him to Philippeville. Then, only, he allowed himself a few hours' rest."

When he awoke from that rest he wrote to Joseph who, with Lucien, was now in Paris :

"All is not lost. I suppose that by collecting all my forces, I shall still have a hundred and fifty thousand men remaining. The federated troops and the best men of the National Guard will furnish me a hundred thousand men and the depôt battalions fifty thousand more. Thus I shall have three hundred thousand soldiers with whom I can at once oppose the enemy.

"I will horse my artillery with carriage horses. I will raise a hundred thousand conscripts. I will arm them with muskets taken from the Royalists and from the ill-disposed members of the National Guard.

"I will raise the whole of Dauphiné, the Lyonnais, and Burgundy. I will overwhelm the enemy.

"But the people must help me and not bewilder me. I am going to Laon. I shall doubtless find people there. I have no news of Grouchy. If he has not been taken, as I fear, I may have fifty thousand men within three days. With them I can keep the enemy engaged and give France and Paris time to do their duty. The Austrians march slowly, the Prussians are afraid of the peasants and dare not advance too fast ; everything may yet be retrieved.

"Write me what effect this horrible piece of bad luck has produced in the Chamber. I believe the deputies will feel convinced that their duty, in this crowning moment,

is to rally round me and save France. Pave the way so that they may support me worthily. Above all, let them show courage and decision."

Having thus written Napoleon rode to Laon. He found that it would be impossible to rally more than a few thousand men—so terrible had been the rout of Waterloo. And meanwhile Wellington and Blucher were marching on Paris. In Paris only could France be mobilized to carry on the war. It was because he had left affairs in Paris to his subordinates the year before that his army had been handed over to the Kings and he himself forced to go to Elba.

Very early on Wednesday morning, June 21, 1815, Napoleon drove into the capital and alighted at the Elysée—the private house which he had been using a good deal of late years in preference to the Tuileries. Joseph and Lucien were awaiting him, and they both looked very grave. The truth was that the Parliament was already wavering and that Fouché, whom Napoleon had loaded with favours, was in process of betraying his master to King Louis in order, if possible, to save his own skin. Lucien, Carnot, and Davoust, his Marshal, advised Napoleon to dismiss the Parliament at once and proclaim himself Dictator until the crisis was passed. They pointed to the enormous crowd which surrounded the house and which continued to shout: "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and to urge that Napoleon should save France.

But Napoleon, whose eyes were always on the future, saw that, if he tried to dismiss the Parliament, and to seize the sole power, there would be civil war in France. For France was well-nigh exhausted. He could hope to save France from her present peril only if France, Parliament and people united, gave him all her trust. Otherwise France would, for the present, fare better without him. He refused to take the extreme step suggested and appealed to the Parliament.

His appeal was refused.

He then offered to attempt to make a peace which should be consistent with the honour and independence of

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France, and called on the Parliament to support him in this effort.

"Against Napoleon alone," cried one of the Members of Parliament, when this offer was being discussed, "Europe has declared war. I see only one man between us and peace. Let him go and peace is assured.

That view won the day. Napoleon was formally asked, the next morning, Thursday, June 22, 1815, to offer his abdication in the interests of his country. The Man weighed the situation in his mind. Every regular soldier in France belonged to him body and soul, and he knew it. But there were thousands of French citizens who would defend the Parliament against any attack. He had the legal power, as Emperor, to dissolve the Parliament—but——

The shouts of the crowd under his windows grew louder: "*Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Empereur!*" . . .

Napoleon paced his study, terribly uneasy. What was his duty? What was best for France? To dare everything in the name of the Revolution or to go and leave in the hands of Providence the cause to which he had devoted all his energies and all his hopes? The Revolution, he reflected now, could never succumb even if, for a time, it suffered eclipse. And civil war must bring utter ruin on France. France had given so much; France had so little of her strength left to give. "The expression in his eyes," says a witness, "showed the sadness that filled his soul."

He took his decision, and on that June afternoon restored to the French people the power which it had given him. He received the thanks of the Parliament for his "generous sacrifice." Three days later, on Sunday, June 25, 1815, exactly a week after the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon left Paris for ever and went to Malmaison. Josephine's house, where Hortense, Josephine's daughter, awaited him.

"The Hundred Days" was at an end.

END OF BOOK V

# BOOK VI

## "NAKED AS I AM"

"Adversity was wanting to my career. . . . To-day, thanks to misfortune, (men) can judge of me naked as I am."

NAPOLEON to LAS CASES at St. Helena.

## CHAPTER LXXIX

### "THAT OF A GENTLEMAN"

Hortense welcomed Napoleon and comforted his agony of mind as best she could. Comfort came also from other quarters. Every soldier in France was calling for the Man and even the Parliament in Paris had begun, apparently, to cherish doubts of the wisdom of what it had done.

And then came news to the Man that the Kings, in their march towards the capital, had committed a great mistake. It might be possible to spring upon them and destroy them. Napoleon instantly sent a messenger to the War Council in Paris to say that he placed his services at their disposal as a simple General. As soon as the crisis was over he would leave the country.

The War Council refused this offer. Thereupon Napoleon took off his uniform and put on civilian clothes. Accompanied by his faithful friend General Bertrand and others he drove away from the scenes of his mighty labours towards the coast. He had decided to end his days in America. On the way, he was recognized by a regiment of cavalry which he happened to pass, and the men crowded round him and begged him, with tears, to put himself at their head and return to Paris.

The temptation must have been overwhelming, for Napoleon knew that now there were at least 50,000 of his old soldiers under arms ready to sell their lives for France. But he knew also that, in face of the decision of the Parliament, his return could achieve nothing but fresh disaster. The Man set his face to go into exile—for France.

He reached Rochefort on July 3, and the town and the

garrison welcomed him as if he had come in the fulness of his power. Again he was begged to put himself in command of the Army. So eager were their demands that he consented to write once more to the Parliament in Paris and offer his services. A final refusal met his offer and he put the idea away from him for ever. His brother Joseph had joined him and they busied themselves with preparations for sailing. But it soon became apparent that there was no hope of leaving the harbour, for the English ship *Bellerophon* was in waiting to prevent any such attempt.

On July 8, the day on which Louis XVIII came scurrying back to Paris "in the baggage of the British Army," Napoleon went on board the French frigate, the *Saale*. Two days later—the day on which the Kings who had destroyed Napoleon, and who supposed that they had destroyed also the Revolution, entered Paris in triumph for the second time in a little over a year—the Man's faithful friends Bertrand and Las Cases were received by Sir Frederick Maitland on board the *Bellerophon*. They asked that their Master might be allowed to sail for America in peace, and declared that he had voluntarily resigned his power though he might have fought on, had he so chosen, with "a possibility of fortune turning in his favour."

"'If that is the case,' I said," declares Maitland, "'why not ask an asylum in England?'

"He [Las Cases] answered:

"'There are many reasons for his [Napoleon] not wishing to reside in England; the climate is too damp and cold; it is too near France; he would be, as it were, in the centre of every change and revolution that might take place there, and would be subject to suspicion; he has been accustomed to consider the English as his most inveterate enemies and they have been induced to look upon him as a monster without one of the virtues of a human being.'"

"*Why not ask an asylum in England?*" Was it these words of the chivalrous Maitland which decided Napoleon to give up all idea of attempting to "run the blockade" in his frigate and, in Maitland's own words, "throw

himself on the protection of his former foe"? In any case, three days later, on July 13, Napoleon wrote to the Prince Regent of England, afterwards George IV:

"YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,

"A victim to the factions which distract my country and to the enmity of the greatest powers of Europe, I have terminated my political career and I come, like Themistocles, to throw myself upon the hospitality of the British people. I put myself under the protection of their laws; which I claim from your Royal Highness, as the most powerful, the most constant and the most generous of my enemies. "NAPOLEON."

This letter has often been derided as a piece of shameless impudence. Yet the Count of Artois who, while his brother Louis XVI reigned at Versailles, had been England's most bitter foe and who, with his brothers, had helped to pluck America from England, had been received as a brother by George III during the Revolution, had been housed in the Royal palace of Holyrood and treated as a Prince. Might not a greater and nobler foe, to whom it had been said by a British naval captain: "Why not seek an asylum in England?" expect at least as generous treatment?

Sir Frederick Maitland, however, could promise nothing definite and did promise nothing definite. Nevertheless he was very anxious to see Napoleon come aboard his ship, for he had secret orders to secure this if possible. Moreover there was good reason for expedition since, as he says himself, the town of Rochefort was still full of troops who worshipped the Man and might rally round him. An informant told him that:

"though the townspeople were well inclined towards the Bourbon family, the garrison, consisting of 4,000 men, were all attached to Bonaparte; but if he were once on board the ship, there would be no risk in doing so [getting provisions from the town], as their fear of his [Napoleon's] meeting with bad treatment would keep the soldiers in awe."

Maitland therefore urged Napoleon to make haste, and at 6 a.m. on July 15, 1815, sent off a boat to fetch him. Napoleon, having bidden a last farewell to Joseph—for these brothers, who, during forty-five years, had shared so many ups and downs of fate, were never more to meet —entered the British boat and was rowed to the *Bellerophon*. Says Maitland:

"On coming on board the *Bellerophon*, he was received without any of the honours generally paid to persons of high rank; the guard was drawn out on the break of the poop, but did not present arms."

Maitland made the excuse to Napoleon that it was not usual to pay such honour on a British war-ship before 8 a.m. Napoleon was dressed in the uniform of the Chausseur à Cheval of the Imperial Guard and wore the star of the Legion of Honour. When he came on the quarter-deck, he "pulled off his hat and, addressing me in a firm tone of voice, said: 'I come to throw myself on the protection of your Prince and laws.'"

Sir Frederick Maitland, and his Admiral, Sir Henry Hobham, treated Napoleon with a rare and delightful courtesy which will, for ever, honour their names and which reflected honour on their country. Indeed, Sir Frederick Maitland in his narrative of the "Surrender of Napoleon" goes out of his way to deny the false and malicious statements which were concocted even about this sad twilight of Napoleon's power. He has written:

"I here, therefore, once for all, beg to state most distinctly that, from the time of his [Napoleon's] coming on board my ship, to the period of his quitting her, his conduct was invariably that of a gentleman; and in no one instance do I recollect him to have made use of a rude expression, or to have been guilty of any kind of ill-breeding."

On July 23, off Ushant, Napoleon looked his last on France:

"He cast many a melancholy look at the coast of France, but made few observations on it."

At daybreak on July 24, Torbay was reached. Napoleon exclaimed: "What a beautiful country!" There was a letter from Lord Keith, the Admiral, awaiting Maitland. It contained this sentence:

"You may say to Napoleon that I am under the greatest personal obligations to him for his attention to my nephew, who was taken and brought before him at Belle Alliance [at Waterloo], and who must have died if he [Napoleon] had not ordered a surgeon to dress him immediately and sent him to a hut. . . ."

"Bonaparte," says Maitland, "recollected the circumstance alluded to and seemed much gratified with Lord Keith's acknowledgments."

Meanwhile the War Lords in London ordered that not a single soul was to be admitted to the ship—not even Maitland's wife—nor was anybody to land from her. And when hundreds of small boats came crowding out to see the great captive they were held at arm's length—though Napoleon showed himself on deck. The reason for this extraordinary precaution is not easy to determine until it is realized that the utmost anxiety prevailed lest the common folk of England, "the poor" as they were called, might be seduced into taking pity on Napoleon, the champion of the common folk of France. Nor was this fear without its justification. The "poor" of England, at that time, were a class deserving of sincere pity.

The *Bellerophon* was moved to Plymouth and there Lord Keith and Sir Henry Bunbury came aboard and told Napoleon that it had been decided he should be sent to St. Helena. Napoleon later said to Maitland:

"'The idea is a perfect horror to me. To be placed for life on an island within the tropics, at an immense distance from any land, cut off from all communication with the world and everything that I hold dear in it. It is worse than Tamerlane's iron cage. I would prefer being delivered up to the Bourbons.

"'Among other insults—but that is a mere bagatelle, a very secondary consideration—they style me General! They can have no right to call me General, they may as

well call me Archbishop, for I was head of the Church, as well as the Army.' "

"He added: 'They might as well have signed my death warrant at once, as it is impossible a man of my habit of body can live long in such a climate.' "

A few days later he said:

" 'It is true I have always been the enemy of England, but it has ever been an open and declared one; and I paid it the very best compliment it was possible for man to do in throwing myself on the generosity of your Prince. . . . They say I made no conditions. Certainly. I made no conditions, how could an individual enter into terms with a nation? I wanted nothing of them but hospitality, or, as the ancients would express it, "air and water." ' "

Napoleon then thanked Maitland for his goodness to him and asked if he might attach the ship's surgeon, Mr. O'Meara, to his person as he had formed a very high opinion of him.

Maitland consented, saying:

"that I had the highest opinion of him [O'Meara], both for his skill and attention; that he had given me so much satisfaction, while under my command, that I had procured his removal from two different ships in which he had served with me previous to my appointment to the *Bellerophon*, that he might accompany me; and that I was convinced he was a man of principle and integrity."

On August 7, 1815, Napoleon was transferred at sea from the *Bellerophon* to the *Northumberland* in which the voyage to St. Helena was to be made. He had not been allowed to set foot on English soil.

"He walked out of the cabin," says Maitland, "with a steady, firm step, came up to me and, taking off his hat, said, 'Captain Maitland, I take this last opportunity of once more returning you many thanks for the manner in which you have treated me while on board the *Bellerophon*, and also to request you will convey them to the officers and ship's company you command.' Then turning to the officers, who were standing by me, he added: 'Gentlemen,

I have requested your captain to express my gratitude to you for your attention to me and to those who have followed my fortunes.'

"He then went forward to the gangway; and before he went down the ship's side bowed two or three times to the ship's company who were collected in the waist and on the forecastle. . . . After the boat had shoved off and got the distance of about thirty yards from the ship he stood up, pulled his hat off and bowed, first to the officers and then to the men; and immediately sat down and entered into conversation with Lord Keith with as much apparent composure as if he had been only going from one ship to another to pay a visit."

Maitland thus sums up his personal impression of Napoleon:

"His manners were extremely pleasing and affable; he joined in every conversation, related numerous anecdotes, and endeavoured, in every way, to promote good humour. . . . Lord Keith appears to have formed a very high opinion of the fascination of his conversation and expressed it very emphatically to me after he had seen him; speaking of his wish for an interview with the Prince Regent, 'Damn the fellow,' he said, 'if he had obtained an interview with His Royal Highness, in half an hour they would have been the best friends in England!'

"He appeared to have great command of temper; for though no man could have had greater trials than fell to his lot during the time he remained on board the *Bellerophon*, he never in my presence, or as far as I know, allowed a fretful or captious expression to escape him; even the day he received the notification from Sir Henry Bunbury that it was determined to send him to St. Helena, he chatted and conversed with the same cheerfulness as usual. It has been asserted that he was acting a part all the time he was on board the ship; but still, even allowing that to be the case, nothing but great command of temper could have enabled him to have sustained such a part for so many days, in his situation. . . .

"One morning he began to talk of his wife and child. . . . I looked him steadily in the face, to observe whether he showed any emotion; the tears were standing in his

eyes and the whole of his countenance appeared evidently under the influence of a strong feeling of grief. . . .

"After he had quitted the ship, being desirous to know the feeling of the ship's company towards him, I asked my servant what the people said of him. 'Why, sir,' he answered, 'I heard several of them conversing together about him this morning; when one of them observed:

"'"Well, they may abuse that man as much as they please; but if the people of England knew him as well as we do they would not hurt a hair of his head," in which the others agreed.'

"This was the more extraordinary as he never went through the ship's company but once, immediately after his coming on board, when I attended him, and he did not speak to any of the men, merely returning their salute by pulling off his hat; and in consequence of his presence they suffered many privations, such as not being allowed to see their wives and friends or to go on shore, having to keep watch in port, etc., and when he left the ship the only money he distributed was twenty Napoleons to my steward, fifteen to one of the under-servants, and ten to the cook."

Midshipman George Home of the *Bellerophon* told afterwards how, on coming ashore, he was besieged by about twenty girls who asked him

"five thousand questions about Napoleon . . . What like was he—was he really a man? Were his hands and clothes all over blood when he came on board? Was it true that he had killed three horses in riding from Waterloo to the *Bellerophon?* Were we not all frightened for him? Was his voice like thunder?"

## CHAPTER LXXX

### BLIND MAN'S BUFF

Napoleon was permitted to keep his sword when he came aboard the *Northumberland*, but all his friends were disarmed. On reaching the ship on that 7th of August, 1815, he said to Sir George Cockburn, the Admiral:

"Here I am, General, at your orders."

Two days later the long voyage to St. Helena began, eight other ships of war escorting the *Northumberland*. Says Glover, the British Admiral's secretary:

"The Admiral as well as the officers at all times address him as General. . . . However, the difficulty of repressing the inclination to pay him marked attention is evident and the curiosity of both officers and men in watching his actions is very easily perceived."

Why it should have been necessary to repress the inclination to pay marked attention to the fallen foe is difficult to understand. But orders are orders, and these honest British sailors had no choice but to obey. On August 15, however, Napoleon's forty-sixth birthday, his health was drunk at dinner by all the officers, "with which civility he seemed much pleased." That was a fine day, but stormy weather lay ahead. The voyage was monotonous and uneventful. St. Helena was sighted at six o'clock in the evening of October 14, just sixty-six days after leaving England. On the following morning the *Northumberland* was brought to anchor about half-past ten o'clock. The Governor of the island at once came aboard.

"We amused ourselves," says Glover, "in surveying the stupendous, barren cliffs of St. Helena whose terrific

appearance seemed to be at ill accord with the feelings of our guests."

Napoleon left the ship the next night, October 16, after dark, "to avoid the gaze of the inhabitants who were crowded on the wharf." He was accommodated in a house in the town of James' Town. The next morning, at six o'clock, he rode out with the Governor and Cockburn to inspect Longwood, his future residence. Glover says:

"Bonaparte seemed very well satisfied with the situation and expressed a desire to occupy it as soon as possible."

Longwood, however, required repairing, and so Napoleon went temporarily to "The Briars," the house of a Mr. Balcombe, situated a mile or so beyond the town. Here he occupied an annexe consisting of two rooms and two garrets, "stating that there was quite room enough for him." Says Glover:

"After a few days a marquee was attached to the front of this building and fitted up as a dining-room; and here Bonaparte passed the first two months of his detention, without going out of the grounds, except in one or two instances. . . . In the evening he generally invited himself into the cottage and played cards with the family for two or three hours. Mr. Balcombe's family consists of himself, a truly good-natured and most hospitable, liberal man of plain manners, Mrs. Balcombe, two Miss Balcombes, women grown, although the one is but fifteen and the other between thirteen and fourteen, and two boys, the one about seven and the other five years old. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Balcombe understands French, but both the Miss Balcombes speak it tolerably well, and Bonaparte appeared much delighted in their society.

"These young ladies in a few days became perfectly familiar, and the General seemed highly pleased with their *naïveté*, particularly that of the younger, a pretty girl and a most complete romp when out of sight of her father. He occasionally so completely laid aside his Imperial dignity as to romp with the young ladies who, during such diversions as 'Blind Man's Buff,' etc., called him by the familiar appellation of 'Boney' indeed, the younger,

who appeared the favourite, said anything and everything to him her lively imagination dictated, asking every possible question, and he answering without the slightest apparent reserve."

Longwood was ready by the middle of December and on the 10th of that month Napoleon took up his abode there. The house was a rambling colonial bungalow consisting of about thirty rooms, in separate blocks, and badly infested with rats. It stood on the highest ground in the island, near the centre, and five miles from James' Town. As soon as Napoleon entered the place sentries were placed round its park. A second ring of sentries was also placed. The Man was allowed to do what he pleased within this outer ring. But if he wanted to go beyond he was compelled to allow a British officer to accompany him.

Napoleon had already expressed his fears about the effect of the climate on his health. Glover's opinion of the climate was not favourable, for he writes :

"During over eight months' residence [the *Northumberland* remained at St. Helena till Sir Hudson Lowe and Sir Pulteney Malcolm came out in October 1816] we experienced very little variation and had continued rains. The climate is by no means so healthy as it is generally described to be, the children being sickly and the adults suffering from the liver, of which complaint many of our men died.

"Nothing can possibly be less prepossessing, nay, more horribly forbidding, than the first appearance of this isolated and apparently burnt-up, barren rock which promises neither refreshment nor pleasure. To this terrific and disgusting external appearance . . . I attribute in a great measure the many flattering and flowery descriptions which have been published of the interior beauties of this island, none of which was realized in my ideas. . . . The residence of a month at St. Helena would be tediously long to any one who has been accustomed to live in Europe."

## CHAPTER LXXXI

### SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

The War Lords and the Kings had sent Napoleon to St. Helena in order that the common folk might forget him.

Some of these great personages would much rather have finished him off at once. Blucher and the Prussians took this view and would have shot him had he fallen into their hands. (Wellington, to his credit, protested strongly against this decision.) Louis XVIII would also have shot Napoleon just as he shot the heroic and immortal Marshal Ney. And Lord Liverpool, the British Prime Minister, told Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary :

" We wish that the King of France would hang or shoot Buonaparte [the Italian spelling] as the best termination of the business."

But they all feared the common people, and so, since death was not available, oblivion was decided on. Napoleon must disappear from men's thoughts. He must be as if he had never been. Solitude and Silence must swallow him up.

St. Helena represented the plan of " Solitude and Silence." But the War Lords, naturally, did not admit this ; they declared that St. Helena represented Safety—the Safety of mankind from the enemy of mankind. It was for " Safety's sake " that the Man of the Revolution had been surrounded by a thousand miles of ocean, vast, inaccessible rocks, three regiments of British infantry, five companies of artillery, a detachment of dragoons, and, at sea, two frigates, several brigs, and some sloops. It was for " Safety's sake " that Napoleon was not to be allowed the title of Emperor but was always to be called

" General Bonaparte." It was for " Safety's sake " that an orderly officer should be in constant attendance at Longwood, whose duty it was to see, or obtain, satisfactory information of Napoleon being on the spot, at least twice in the twenty-four hours, and that, after sunset, sentries should be drawn round the house. It was for " Safety's sake " that no letters or packets were to be sent or received by the French unless they were first seen by the Governor. It was for " Safety's sake " that the best house on the island should be assigned to Napoleon, with the exception of Plantation House, the country residence of the Governor. As the Russian Commissioner—for the Kings all kept their " Watchdogs " on the island—wrote :

" St. Helena . . . is the dullest and most inaccessible spot in the world, the easiest to defend, the most difficult to attack, the most expensive, and, above all, the most suitable for the present purpose."

Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, was the man in chief charge of Napoleon. He made the rules of " Safety," which were really the rules of " Solitude and Silence," and he also chose the man who was to be Napoleon's gaoler on the island. What was wanted for this work was evidently a man who would bury Napoleon from human knowledge without at the same time making a martyr of him—for the least whisper of martyrdom, if it reached France, would rouse such a storm among the common folk as might shake King Louis out of his throne and even shake all the other thrones of Europe.

" You know enough of the feelings of people in this country," wrote Lord Liverpool to Lord Castlereagh, " not to doubt that he [Napoleon] would become an object of curiosity, and possibly of compassion, in the course of a few months."

Napoleon's gaoler, therefore, must, above all, be a man incapable of falling under the spell of Napoleon's personality, a man between whom and Napoleon there could be no spark of friendship or even esteem ; yet a man so obedient to orders as never to allow his dislike to

overflow into actual ill-usage. Bathurst and his associates believed they had got exactly what they required in Sir Hudson Lowe, a British officer, whose father had been a surgeon in the service. Lowe had been stationed in Corsica—in Ajaccio—shortly after the Bonaparte family was driven out of the island for favouring the Revolution and opposing Paoli and the English. He had also commanded a body of " Corsican Rangers "—Corsicans, that is to say, who were against the Revolution—after Napoleon's men recaptured the island. Therefore Napoleon would certainly be prepossessed against him.

Again, Lowe had been attached, as a British officer, to the Prussians during the 1814 campaign against Napoleon and had got his knighthood for carrying to London the news that the Kings had marched into Paris and that Napoleon was beaten. Lowe's friendship for those Prussian junkers, Blucher and Gneisenau, who had wished to shoot Napoleon, was a guarantee enough that he would not lose much love to his captive. Moreover, as the Duke of Wellington vouched, Lowe was a stupid man : " As for Lowe, he is a damned fool ! " said the Duke.

Stupid men are never impressed by genius, and they always exercise on genius an irritating effect. Stupid men, also, always obey the letter of the law.

And so this instrument of the plan of " Solitude and Silence " was chosen, interviewed by Wellington in Paris and Bathurst in London, and sent off to his new job. He reached St. Helena in April 1816, and found that affairs there were going on quietly. The retiring Governor, Mr. Wilks, was on good terms with Napoleon, and even the Admiral Cockburn, who had brought Napoleon out, was not unfriendly.

The Man of France was living in two small rooms of equal size about fourteen feet by twelve and ten or eleven high. Each room had two small windows looking out towards the British regimental camp. Napoleon used one room as a bedroom and the other as a sitting-room. In his bedroom was the little camp-bed with the green curtains which he had used at Marengo and Austerlitz.

There was also a screen and an old sofa covered with books. The walls were brown; but the wash-basin, Napoleon's own, was of silver. A portrait of his wife, Marie Louise, and portraits of his little son riding a lamb and pulling on his slippers stood in this room, and there was also a miniature of Josephine. The sitting-room had a writing-table and some bookshelves and another bed. Napoleon had with him a staff of fifty-one people of whom only four, Las Cases, Bertrand, Gourgaud, and Montholon, were his friends; the rest, except Dr. O'Meara, were servants. These faithful friends treated their master with all the honour they had given him at the height of his glory. And Napoleon accepted that honour as an honour done to the French people who had chosen him to be their Emperor. The Emperor of the common folk held his title to be as sacred as was ever the title of a King by Divine Right. And since it was the Kings, and not his own people, who had driven him forth he defied the Kings with all the poor weapons of defiance which were left to him. Even at St. Helena, he resolved, the Revolution must be proud in face of its enemies and the greatness of the French people must not be diminished.

I confess that that resolve of Napoleon seems to me a very brave one, for this eater of soldiers' bread had no love of formality. And anyhow, as he said himself, he was a "dead man." Who cared what he might do or not do? His enemies, who alone were in a position to watch him, would, he knew, be filled with laughter at this Emperor of a farmyard, trying to "ape his betters" to his utter ruin.

"I have the honour," wrote the British Admiral Cockburn to Bertrand, "to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and note of yesterday's date by which you oblige me officially to explain to you that I have no cognizance of any Emperor being actually upon this island, or of any person possessing such dignity having (as stated by you) come hither with me in the *Northumberland*."

Sir Hudson Lowe did not disappoint the hopes of those who had sent him—at least not at first. He behaved

with extreme tactlessness and Napoleon quickly grew to hate him. They met only on six occasions; after that the Man refused to see the Governor again on any consideration.

"His eye, as he examined me," said Napoleon, "was like a hyena's caught in a trap."

Napoleon exploded in presence of this "damned fool" and regretted his explosion afterwards.

"I behaved very ill to him, no doubt," he told Las Cases. "However, the Governor proved himself very insensible to my severity; his dignity did not seem wounded by it. I should have liked to have seen him evince a little anger or pull the door violently after him when he went away."

Lowe wrote a full account of this interview to Lord Bathurst, but got back the rather chilling reply that no language of Napoleon, in the situation in which he was, could be regarded as an insult. Years afterwards Lowe himself wrote:

"It is but justice to Napoleon to observe that he was never so very coarse and rude in his manner or language as he has been represented to have been: many a lie has thus been fathered upon him."

When he wrote those words Lowe had found out that his terrible devotion to the letter of his instructions had not earned for him the promotion he had expected from it. He was already being made to suffer the public hatred which should have fallen on his masters. He had no difficulty now in calling "General Bonaparte," Napoleon.

Almost as soon as Lowe arrived troubles began to multiply. Napoleon was officially requested "no longer to enter into conversation with the persons he met in the course of his walks." Then he was told that his expenses must be cut down. He was receiving £12,000 a year from the British Government for his fifty-one people, but prices at St. Helena were at least three, and probably four, times as high as prices elsewhere. The new figure was to

be £8,000 a year, which allowed slightly more than a pound a week—in actual value—for each of the exiles.

Napoleon did not see why he should pay for his own captivity. Moreover, the attempt to bury him alive and prevent the millions of Frenchmen who loved him from hearing the least word of news about him roused his fighting instincts. He seized the chance given him by a Government, which showed itself so niggardly, and ordered his own silver plate to be broken up and sold publicly. The news of that sale, as he knew, was bound to reach Europe. A little later, when insufficient firewood was provided at Longwood, he had one of his beds cut up for burning. These actions carried news of him to Europe in spite of all the sentries and all the ships. And the Kings and the War Lords trembled. Sir Hudson was told to redouble his precautions.

This was not so easy, for Admiral Cockburn had been succeeded by Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, who was accompanied by his wife, and Malcolm was a man of high intelligence. He insisted, in spite of Lowe, in going to see Napoleon and in introducing to Napoleon the officers of all British ships calling at the island. Lowe became very angry and the relations between the Governor and the Admiral grew strained.

Meanwhile the relations between the Governor and Napoleon had been completely broken. Nor was the Man in a mood to receive the " Watchdogs " of the Kings who had landed on the island on the anniversary of Waterloo—Sturmer for Francis of Austria ; Balmain for Alexander of Russia ; and Montchenu for King Louis XVIII. These worthies had come to keep Napoleon " under observation " ; not one of them ever even saw him during his life.

In October of that first complete year of captivity Napoleon made his gaoler a sporting offer. Seeing, he said in effect, through his secretary, that you refuse to call me the Emperor Napoleon, and seeing that I refuse, in the name of the French people, to be called " General Bonaparte," let me choose some other name altogether which will not offend you nor insult France—for example,

Colonel Muiron. That offer was referred to London—and refused. For, as Forsyth says, Kings are in the habit of adopting occasionally an *incognito*. How awful if Napoleon should be allowed to resemble a *real* King in any one particular!

Lowe must have been very much annoyed by this incident. But he soon had his revenge. One of Napoleon's "faithful few"—Las Cases, that loyal little soul with the ever-ready tongue—was detected in the crime of trying to send a message out of the island without having first of all submitted its contents to Lowe. The Governor gathered his suite about him and went marching to Longwood to arrest the culprit in the very presence of his master. Las Cases, to avoid that, gave himself up and was duly shipped away to the Cape of Good Hope—where everybody leaving St. Helena had to go in the first instance.

Lowe had never done a worse day's work, for Las Cases had a ready pen and loved Napoleon. The plan of "Solitude and Silence" was about to fail badly.

## CHAPTER LXXXII

### "THE LITTLE DUTCH SKIPPER"

NAPOLEON'S freedom was now further restricted. Instead of being allowed to go about freely in a space twelve miles round, he was told he must content himself with a space eight miles round.

He protested vigorously—for what was the use of these irksome restrictions, seeing that escape was impossible in any case? Lowe, however, had his orders. The Governor, too, commanded that no sailor or soldier of the garrison should speak about Napoleon in his letters home, nor even mention Napoleon's name. And the secret police of Europe and the Press were warned to prevent anything at all being said or written about the Man. Even the "Watchdogs" were suspected and watched.

"I should not be surprised," wrote Montchenu, King Louis' "Watchdog," "to hear some day that his [Lowe's] little head had given way under the enormous responsibility of guarding an inaccessible rock defended both on land and on sea by an army."

Louis' "Watchdog" was no friend of Napoleon's. Indeed, the Man utterly despised him.

"I know this Montchenu," said the Man. "He is an old fool, a chatterbox, a carriage general who has never smelt powder. I will not see him. . . . Poor fool, poor old fool, old booby. He is one of those men who support the ancient prejudice that Frenchmen are born mountebanks."

Happily, amid these irritations, came a letter to Napoleon from his mother—which, of course, was read by Lowe before he got it.

Napoleon's mother, though blind, wanted to come to St. Helena:

"I am very old," wrote brave Letitia, "to make a journey of two thousand leagues. I should die, perhaps, on the way, but never mind, I should die nearer you."

That was consolation indeed, and it was needed. For Napoleon was about to lose his good friends, the Malcolms. Admiral Malcolm was leaving St. Helena and was being replaced there by Admiral Plampin. The change took place at midsummer 1817, when Plampin arrived on the *Conqueror*. He came to see the Man who was not prepossessed in his favour.

"He reminds me," said Napoleon, "of one of those drunken little Dutch skippers that I have seen in Holland, sitting at a table with a pipe in his mouth, a cheese and a bottle of geneva before him."

The "little Dutch skipper" had managed to send a thrill of pious horror through the whole island, even before he came to Longwood. He had actually dared to bring out with him to that stern community a young woman who was not his wife.

"To the scandal of the whole rock," wrote Balmain, Alexander of Russia's "Watchdog," "he [Plampin] has brought a lady with him to whom he has given his name; but she is only his mistress. Every one has a fling at him for this."

The Rev. Mr. Boys, a local clergyman, went even further than a "fling." He actually preached a sermon on the subject which created tremendous excitement. The "little Dutch skipper" shook in his shoes and seems to have expected instant ruin. But Sir Hudson Lowe took a more lenient view of the case than the other members of the community. He did not report Plampin, and Plampin, in consequence, remained—as did also the lady. They took up their abode at "The Briars" where Napoleon had lived while Longwood was being got ready. Lowe wrote to Lord Bathurst:

"Admiral Plampin seems to have decided to attempt

no interference whatever. If he took any steps it would be in order to assist me."

This was better than the friendship of the Malcolms for Napoleon, which had been such a worry to the anxious-minded Governor. And so when the Hon. John Elphinstone, the life of whose brother (Lord Keith's nephew) Napoleon had saved at Waterloo, sent out to the Man a beautiful set of chessmen marked with the Imperial eagle and with the letter N. surmounted by a crown, Lowe had no hesitation in writing to Longwood that he only forwarded the gift under protest.

This little pin-prick was the foretaste of new vexations for Napoleon. No longer were visits to be received from British sailors or soldiers, who were forbidden to hold any converse with "the foreigners detained in the island." Moreover the beloved Dr. O'Meara—late of the *Bellerophon*—had fallen foul of Lowe and was obviously marked out for removal. This fact undoubtedly worried Napoleon a great deal, because his health was not good and O'Meara was the only doctor in the place in whom he had any confidence. O'Meara, however, perhaps to quiet Napoleon's fears, invited Dr. Stokoe, the surgeon of the new Admiral's ship, the *Conqueror*, with whom he had become friendly, to come to dine with him at Longwood and contrived to introduce Dr. Stokoe to Napoleon.

"O'Meara and I," says Stokoe, "had been walking for some time about the grounds at a considerable distance from the house when we saw Napoleon come out of the billiard-room [a recent addition to Longwood] accompanied by Count and Madame de Montholon. After taking a few turns before the house, he seated himself on the steps, with Madame de Montholon beside him and with his back towards us. We approached to the distance of fifty yards and stopped for a minute or two, then turned to walk away. The Count came to O'Meara and asked who I was; he returned to Napoleon and came back immediately, saying the Emperor would be glad to see me.

"I was delighted, and yet I felt a dread in approaching the man whose fame as a warrior had reached the remotest corners of the earth.

"I followed the Count who, on coming near, took off his hat and presented me. I did the same and made my best bow, remaining, as the Count did, with my hat off, when Napoleon, after slightly touching his, addressed me in the following words:

"'Surgeon *Conqueror* Man o' War. Fine ship.'

"Upon this O'Meara informed him I spoke Italian."

Napoleon then asked a few commonplace questions and the interview ended. Yet Dr. Stokoe says:

"During the short time I was in the presence of Napoleon my opinion of his character underwent a complete change. I had formed, in my own imagination, the man I expected to see, but I found him so totally the reverse that I had not been two minutes in conversation with him before I felt myself as much at my ease as if talking to an equal. I am not ashamed to confess that this sudden change was accompanied with such a friendly feeling towards him that I could have been at that moment his Ambassador to Sir Hudson to plead for a rescinding of those orders that caused him [Napoleon] to convert his miserable retreat into a voluntary prison."

Stokoe had felt, what so many others had felt, what Rapp, whom Lord Rosebery calls "the most independent and unflattering of all Napoleon's Generals," expressed thus:

"Many people describe Napoleon as a harsh, violent, passionate man. It is because they never knew him. Absorbed as he was in affairs, opposed in his plans, hampered in his projects, his humour was sometimes impatient and fluctuating. But he was so good and so generous that he was soon appeased. . . ."

The worthy naval doctor, a Durham man, with the shrewdness of the North Country, thought it wise to tell Admiral Plampin about his little interview with Napoleon —for Sir Hudson Lowe was known to have very long ears —and so, next morning, he repaired to "The Briars" and reported. The "little Dutch skipper" was not pleased.

"You could," he declared, "have quite easily refused

to speak to Bonaparte, and you ought to have done so. It is not at all necessary to be polite to the General [Napoleon]. There are orders issued and they must be obeyed. You have acted very improperly as this is a subject on which I and the Governor are now quarrelling. As you have seen him in this way I shall give an order that whenever any officer of the squadron is invited to dine with Mr. O'Meara, or the officers on duty at Longwood, they are to hold no communication with General Bonaparte, even if he should ask for it, without my previous sanction."

This was an entire reversal of the policy of Admiral Malcolm, Napoleon's friend. It showed how the quarrel between Lowe and Plampin was going. Poor "little Dutch skipper," what could he do against Lowe in the difficult circumstances in which he was living? "The Admiral's lady" was actually present during the interview with Dr. Stokoe. She asked the doctor what he thought of Napoleon, and, when the doctor told her, remarked that every stranger came away from Longwood with the same favourable impression. Curiously enough Lady Lowe seems to have shared the attitude of "the Admiral's lady," for she remarked, when Napoleon refused to accept an invitation addressed to "General Bonaparte":

"He would not come to my house and I thought him perfectly right."

I have often wondered whether this was not Sir Hudson Lowe's view also: his secret view. If only Sir Hudson Lowe had not been quite so keen to become Governor of Ceylon!

Lowe-of-the-long-ears soon got wind of Dr. Stokoe's talk with Napoleon. He sent for the doctor at once.

"He expressed surprise," wrote Dr. Stokoe, "at not having seen me before. I replied that, on returning from Longwood, I had waited upon the Admiral. . . ."

"'In what language,' Lowe asked, 'was the conversation held?'

"'In Italian.'"

This answer, the doctor thought, disturbed the Governor very much.

## CHAPTER LXXXIII

### A NIGHT CALL

Napoleon remained the soldier of the Revolution. And he spent all his time at Longwood, as he had spent all his time, everywhere else, working for the Revolution and planning for it and hoping for it.

His light burned until far into the misty nights—as it had burned at Valence and Auxonne, in the Tuileries, at St. Cloud, and at Malmaison. He kept his secretary, Montholon, busy taking down his views on a vast number of topics, views and expressions full of the glory of France and of the French people and destined, in the fulness of time, to play their part in ridding France for ever of her Kings and her "Glittering Beings" and establishing the Revolution in her heart.

And his little court watched over him, and grew jealous of each other, and were bored, and quarrelled—as people will who are cabined together in a small place. Thus, young Gourgaud, who really worshipped Napoleon, was bitterly, terribly jealous of Montholon, the secretary, and even of Bertrand. He was also touchy. Once Napoleon, fifteen years his senior, called him a child.

"Me a child!" cried Gourgaud. "I shall soon be thirty-four! I have eighteen years of service. I have been in thirteen campaigns. I have received three wounds. And then to be treated like this. Calling me a child is calling me a fool!"

"In short," wrote Gourgaud himself of this incident, "I am very angry. The Emperor seeks to calm me; I remain silent; we pass to the dining-room. His Majesty

wishes to play chess, but places the pieces all awry. He speaks to me gently:

"'I know you have commanded troops and batteries, but you are, after all, very young.'

"I only reply by a gloomy silence."

Of another occasion Gourgaud records that he spoke of his "chagrin."

"You speak of sorrow, you!" exclaimed Napoleon. "And I! What sorrows have I not had! What things to reproach myself with! You at any rate have nothing to regret. . . . Do you suppose that when I wake at night I have not bad moments—when I think of what I was and what I am?"

Gourgaud sometimes lectured Napoleon.

"I, though I have long years of life before me, am already dead," said the Man.

"Yes, sir," remarked Gourgaud, "it is indeed horrible. It would have been better to die before coming here. But as one is here, one should have the courage to put up with the situation. It would be so ignominious to die at St. Helena."

Another day Gourgaud was sulky. Napoleon pinched his ear—the sign he always gave of his affection.

"Why are you so sad?" he asked. "What's the matter with you? Pluck up and be gay, Gorgo Gorgotto, we will set about a book together, my son."

Not even Napoleon, though, could assuage Gourgaud's jealousy of Montholon, and one day "Gorgo Gorgotto" actually challenged the secretary to a duel. Napoleon put a stop to that folly. Then Gourgaud said he must go away from the island, as he could no longer endure the strain.

He sailed on February 13, 1818, after having wept bitterly at parting from Napoleon. In the same ship sailed Mr., Mrs., the two Misses and the two Masters Balcombe, all of whom had been expelled from the island by Sir Hudson Lowe for being too friendly to Napoleon

and for carrying letters for him or for some other cause. A few weeks before, Napoleon had sent the girls, with whom he had once played Blind Man's Buff, two plates of sweets. Lowe heard of it and ordered the plates and sweets to be returned.

With Las Cases gone, and the Malcolms gone, and Gourgaud and the Balcombes gone, Napoleon's poor little circle was reduced to the Bertrands and the Montholons and O'Meara. But the Man managed to keep up his courage and go on with his work. He rose late, having worked late, and then might walk or work or read—what joy the arrival of books gave him !—till the evening. After dinner he often read aloud to his friends, preferring tragedies to all other literature. And very often Madame Montholon fell asleep. Then would come a pause and :

"*Oh ! Madame Montholon, vous dormez !*"

Lowe, however, was growing more and more suspicious of Dr. O'Meara. For one thing, the doctor thought that Napoleon was showing signs of the inflammation of the liver and bowels which was so dreadfully prevalent at St. Helena. For another, the doctor did not give the Governor all the information which the Governor wanted. For a third, the doctor was known to be writing private letters to a friend in London who was in close touch with the British Cabinet. Finally, the doctor was suspected of helping Napoleon to smuggle letters out of the island. And so Lowe, on April 10, 1818, ordered O'Meara to remain at Longwood and not leave the place without his [Lowe's] permission. The doctor, an Irishman, protested strongly —and effectively ! Lowe wrote to Bathurst and got the reply :

"The reason was not sufficiently serious to justify, in the eyes of the public, the recall of the only doctor whose visits were tolerated by Napoleon."

Amazing sentiments, truly, for Bathurst ! What could have happened to make this apostle of the plan of "Solitude and Silence" so careful of public opinion in such a matter ? The answer is—Las Cases. That worthy little man had not been idle since he was expelled

from the island. He had published the famous *Letters from the Cape* which Napoleon had given to him before he went away and in which a highly coloured picture of the Exile was afforded. And those *Letters from the Cape* had thrilled the publics of England and France so that the Kings grew deeply uneasy. Was Napoleon, though dead, yet speaking ?

Apparently so, for, in July, *The Edinburgh Review* began to thunder against the policy of " Solitude and Silence " and found a very sympathetic audience for its thunderings. Then Gourgaud reached London, saw Bathurst and told him that Napoleon was not ill and was very happy and very well off. No one knows, till this day, why " Gorgo Gorgotto " took this line, for he was presently to become one of the fiercest critics of the English Government. It may be that he was acting a part in order to encourage Bathurst to some fresh measure of restraint which should have the effect of making a martyr of Napoleon. In any case Bathurst acted at once—for now he could answer his critics in Parliament out of Gourgaud's mouth. Orders to send O'Meara, " the only doctor whose visits were tolerated by Napoleon," out of the island, were despatched to Lowe, who had for so long been asking for them.

Meanwhile Napoleon's health had been causing O'Meara some anxiety. In July 1818, the Man complained of a pain in his side. His legs, lips, and gums swelled up and he became feverish and showed signs of bronchitis. O'Meara asked for a consultation, and Lowe recommended a Dr. Baxter, inspector of the local hospital. Napoleon refused to see Dr. Baxter. But he said he would like to see Dr. Stokoe, whom he had already met with O'Meara. Dr. Stokoe got a note from Admiral Plampin telling him of this wish of Napoleon. The good doctor was at once much alarmed, for he foresaw trouble with Lowe if he went to Longwood. So he wrote to the " little Dutch skipper " asking to be excused the honour and then visited O'Meara to explain why he had behaved in this fashion.

A week later, Sir Thomas Reade, Lowe's adjutant, sent for Stokoe, and no sooner had the doctor reached his office when in strode Sir Hudson himself.

"Mr. Stokoe," he said, "I cannot convince these people at Longwood that I did not influence you in your refusal to see General Bonaparte the other day, and I wish you to state to me particularly your reasons for having done so."

Stokoe, taken aback, mumbled something about the responsibility being too great for a single doctor. Lowe asked him to write him an official note to that effect. He did so. Lowe glanced at the note and then wrote another, in which Mr. Stokoe was made to say that he had "great objections to go to Longwood, but, if obliged to do so, he would wish to visit the General with other medical men, excluding his private attendant" (*i.e.* O'Meara).

"I was," says Stokoe, "looking over his shoulder as he wrote, and as soon as I saw him write the last line, I suspected a sinister motive. I therefore immediately observed that I must object to that part of his statement, as it would convey the idea that I was unwilling to consult with Mr. O'Meara, which was not the fact. He drew his pen through the words and added, 'in addition to his private attendant,' but he did not finish the letter. I had disappointed him. . . ."

Lowe, says Stokoe, wanted to be able to write to Lord Bathurst that he, Stokoe, surgeon to the Admiral's flagship, refused to meet O'Meara in consultation. Lowe need not have troubled, for, as has been said, Bathurst, thanks to his interview with Gourgaud, had already decided to bring O'Meara home. Very soon the delighted Governor received Bathurst's orders that O'Meara should be removed from his post and replaced "by any surgeon on the island approved of by Napoleon."

Lowe decided on strong measures. O'Meara was arrested and his papers were searched. He left St. Helena soon afterwards, and on October 28, 1818, wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty:

"I think it my duty to state, as his late medical attendant, that considering the disease of the liver with which he is afflicted, the progress it had made in him, and reflecting upon the great mortality produced by that complaint in the Island of St. Helena (so strongly exemplified in the number of deaths in the 66th Regiment the St. Helena Regiment, the squadron and Europeans in general, and particularly in H.M. ship *Conqueror*, which ship has lost about one-sixth of her complement, nearly the whole of whom have died within the last eight months), it is my opinion that the life of Napoleon Bonaparte will be endangered by a longer residence in such a climate as that of St. Helena, especially if that residence be aggravated by a continuance of these disturbances and irritations to which he has hitherto been subjected and of which it is the nature of his distemper to render him peculiarly susceptible."

No notice was taken of this, and, because O'Meara was foolish enough to suggest to the Admiralty that Lowe had hinted to him that, as Napoleon's doctor, he might take steps to put the prisoner out of the way, he was dismissed the service.

The year 1819 began. Lowe put a doctor of whom he approved, Dr. Verling, into O'Meara's old quarters. But Napoleon refused to see Dr. Verling. On January 16 the Man had a giddy attack and then a faint attack. He demanded to see Dr. Stokoe. At daybreak on Sunday, January 17, 1819, the following note was put into Dr. Stokoe's hands:

"Longwood. 1 a.m.

"Sir,

"The Emperor has just had a sudden and violent attack. You are the only medical man at present in this country in whom he has shown any confidence. I beg you not to lose a moment in hastening to Longwood. On your arrival ask for me. I hope that you will arrive in the course of the night. I am much troubled."

The letter was signed by Bertrand and with it was enclosed a note from Admiral Plampin's secretary to the Captain of the *Conqueror*.

"The Admiral has desired me to say that you are to order Mr. Stokoe [Surgeon of the *Conqueror*] to go directly to Longwood and call on Dr. Verling, as Buonaparte [Italian spelling] is very ill."

The doctor obeyed. He reached Bertrand's rooms at seven o'clock in the morning. He was told that Napoleon, who had fainted, was better; and had taken a hot bath. Napoleon was now sleeping. Stokoe had breakfast with the Bertrands and then saw Montholon, who proposed that he should take O'Meara's place and become Napoleon's surgeon. The doctor declined and explained his reasons. Montholon went away and returned in an hour with an agreement, in eight articles, appointing Dr. Stokoe "surgeon to the Emperor Napoleon." These articles stipulated that Stokoe was not to be taken away "at least by a simple order of the Governor and especially as long as the disease continues," was to be considered as an Englishman holding a civil appointment, and was not to be obliged to render an account to any person of Napoleon's health.

"No. 6. *He is not to be obliged to render an account of what he sees or hears at Longwood unless anything which, in his judgment, might compromise his oath of allegiance to his country and his sovereign.*"

The articles were "to be done with the permission of his Chief, Rear-Admiral Plampin." Dr. Stokoe saw nothing in these articles "incompatible with the honour of a British officer and a gentleman," and said that, if Plampin and Lowe consented, he would accept the appointment. He was then taken to Napoleon's room.

## CHAPTER LXXXIV

### A HANDFUL OF BEANS

Napoleon was lying on a sofa. His skin looked sallow and his features were drawn. The pain in his side had not abated and the slightest pressure on that spot made him cry out.

"How long," asked Napoleon, "might a man live with such a complaint? Please tell me the bare truth?"

"There are instances of men living to an advanced period," the cautious north-countryman said.

"Yes, but is one likely to live to that period in a tropical climate?"

"No."

"What is the danger to be apprehended?"

"Inflammation and possibly suppuration."

"What would be the consequence of that?"

"If matter formed and it broke into the intestines, he might be saved; if it pointed externally, he might be saved by an operation; but if it burst into the cavity of the abdomen death must ensue."

Napoleon clenched his hand.

"I should have lived to the age of eighty," he exclaimed, "if they had not brought me to this vile place."

Dr. Stokoe left Napoleon and wrote out a bulletin as follows:

"I found the patient in a very weak state, complaining of considerable pain in the right side, in the region of the liver, and with shooting pain in the right shoulder. About midnight he had been seized suddenly with violent pains in the head, succeeded by vertigo and syncope which continued nearly a quarter of an hour. After recovering

from this state he had recourse to a warm bath which produced violent perspiration and relieved him immediately.

"From the evident tendency of a determination of blood to the head, it will be highly necessary that a medical man should be near his person, in order that immediate assistance may be afforded in case of a recurrence of the above alarming symptoms as well as for the daily treatment of chronic hepatitis [inflammation of the liver] which the above symptoms indicate."

At two o'clock in the afternoon Stokoe left Longwood and went at once to "The Briars" to see Admiral Plampin. He showed him the agreement, and the "little Dutch skipper" saw nothing to object to in it. But Lowe, who had had a copy sent him through Captain Nicholls, the British orderly officer at Longwood, was of a very different opinion, in spite of the fact that Lord Bathurst had ordered him to appoint "any doctor agreeable to Napoleon."

All that evening Napoleon continued to be very unwell. He was suffering from an attack of Malta fever—an opinion reached by Sir Arthur Keith, the distinguished Curator of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and also by the late Sir William Leishman, both of whom carefully examined the records left by the doctors. This opinion, moreover, finds further confirmation from the fact that the two portions of Napoleon's bowels, which are now preserved in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, show, not deposits of cancer, but enlarged glandular substance. Sir Arthur Keith has written:

"No one who has tabulated from the records left by O'Meara, Stokoe, and Autommarchi, the symptoms manifested month after month by Napoleon during the first three years of his illness can doubt the recurrent febrile [feverish] nature of his original disease. The symptoms are neither those of gastric ulcer nor gastric cancer, but of a nature which shows he suffered from a form of Malta fever or of an infection nearly akin to Malta fever."

Was this "infection nearly akin to Malta fever" the St. Helena disease which had killed so many of the crew

of the *Conqueror?* Or was it an old-standing infection dating from boyhood—the fever he had suffered from in Corsica—made active by the damp walls of Longwood or the bad climate of St. Helena? It is hard to say. Napoleon undoubtedly suffered at times throughout his life from sick attacks of a more or less obscure kind. He had one on the way to Moscow, at the Borodino, during the hot weather, and there are records of others. During these attacks he lost his energy and grew listless. Hot weather, too, always seems to have distressed him, for he nearly always refers to its presence in his letters. At St. Helena, from 1818 onwards, he was certainly—though intermittently—a sick man; yet Sir Frederick Maitland had noticed how well he seemed when he came aboard the *Bellerophon.*

His sickness, however, aroused in the mind of Sir Hudson Lowe nothing but suspicion. Probably the fellow was only pretending to be ill. And so, although a fresh request for Dr. Stokoe's services reached him at midnight, he took no action until the following day. Stokoe, however, as a doctor, had taken upon himself to return to his patient without waiting to be told to do so. He reached Longwood at six o'clock in the morning. Napoleon was then better. But a relapse soon occurred, and once more the doctor was summoned. He saw Plampin before going to Longwood, and the "little Dutch skipper" made it plain that he had got his own instructions from Lowe. He questioned the doctor closely and then demanded why, in the bulletin he had written, Napoleon was described only as "the patient."

"I asked Count Bertrand what I should say," said Stokoe, "with respect to the name, when he answered 'Napoleon' or 'the patient,' which was my reason for not putting down 'General Bonaparte.'"

Here was treason indeed. Yet Stokoe was allowed to go to Longwood. He found Napoleon much worse and decided to stay the night. He also begged his patient to submit to be bled.

"The careless gesture of a fatalist," was Napoleon's

only reply to this request. But at five in the morning, "the headache having become unbearable," the Man submitted. He extended his arm and Dr. Stokoe opened a vein. Some slight relief followed the little operation. The doctor wished to remain all day with his patient, but he was recalled by the Admiral. He went and saw Plampin and told him what he thought of Napoleon. The "little Dutch skipper" showed such ill-humour that, on returning to his ship, Stokoe wrote: "The experience of to-day points to the necessity of my declining all further communication with Longwood," and asked to be relieved of that duty. But scarcely had he dried the ink on his letter when a new call from Napoleon reached him. Stokoe hurried back to Plampin who ordered him to go back to Longwood but to return by 10.30 the next morning at the latest.

During a second night the doctor sat up with his patient, who was a little better. The next morning Napoleon asked him to remain for a time and so kept him late—for which lateness the poor doctor had to pay heavily:

"Because General Bonaparte desired you to stay there you disobey my order," exclaimed the "little Dutch skipper"; "you appear to consider General Bonaparte's desire paramount to any order of mine."

"Would you," the doctor asked, "have had me leave him?"

"Certainly; since you do not think that your presence was absolutely necessary?"

Dr. Stokoe never saw Napoleon again. He was sent home to England and then brought back, at once, to St. Helena, and tried by court-martial. The real charge against him was that he had written in his bulletin, a copy of which he had left with Napoleon, the statement:

"*A recurrence* [of the attack] *may soon prove fatal, particularly if medical attendance is not at hand.*"

That statement was true, but it put both Lowe and Plampin in a most dangerous position—for Napoleon

refused to see the doctors they desired that he should see. What if Napoleon happened to die and this bulletin happened to reach the millions of men and women in Europe whose love and devotion to the Man grew daily stronger? The Kings would be accused, then, of assassination and Napoleon would be hailed as a martyr, comparable, in his martyrdom, to England's other French victim, Joan of Arc. And so the unhappy doctor was found guilty, was dismissed the service, and, after twenty years of distinguished work, lost his pension. But, queerly enough, his pension was, later on, restored to him.

The sick man of Longwood had lost his second doctor. No wonder that, shortly after Dr. Stokoe had been sent home, Balmain, Alexander of Russia's "Watchdog," wrote to his Government (April 22, 1819):

"Nothing can be more absurd, more impolitic, less generous and less delicate than the conduct of the English to Napoleon."

The "Watchdogs" were reduced, now, to two, for Sturmer, Francis of Austria's representative, had been withdrawn at the suggestion of Lowe after he had become almost maniacal as a result of illness. Balmain soon followed Sturmer, declaring:

"Far from acclimatizing myself to this horrible rock, I suffer constantly from my nerves; my health is already ruined by the climate."

Had he also contracted the local fever? In any case, Lowe and Napoleon now faced each other, almost without intermediaries. And the odds of the encounter were heavily in Lowe's favour, for the "little Dutch skipper," his only possible restraint, was in no position to be troublesome owing to the continued presence of "the Admiral's lady" at "The Briars." The "Watchdog" of Louis XVIII, the "poor old booby" Montchenu, who now represented France and Austria and Russia, was a mere cypher. Moreover Napoleon was very sick, and had not even a doctor *whom he could trust* to defend him.

Nevertheless the Man of the Revolution braced himself for this last struggle against the power of the Kings. He

had reason to know that the common folk had not forgotten him, but that, on the contrary, their love still burned for him as it had burned in the old days. He was their Emperor still.

"Long, long will they tell of him under the thatched roof;
In fifty years the humble dwelling will know no other history,
Children, through this village I saw him ride, followed by Kings."

As the Emperor he would live and work and die. He defied Sir Hudson Lowe and refused to admit any of the Governor's officers to his household. The wretched orderly officer, Nicholls, who was charged with the duty of seeing the prisoner twice in each twenty-four hours, had a difficult time.

"I believe," he reported on April 23, 1819, "that I saw Napoleon Bonaparte to-day, in the act of stropping his razor in his dressing-room."

And most of his reports were to the same effect. Napoleon had become invisible; he had met the plan of "Solitude and Silence" with the plan of Mystery. The Mystery of Napoleon grew and began to fill the world so that the Kings themselves became uneasy. It was discovered that even the weak may possess terrible weapons of offence. Lowe asked Napoleon to receive one of his friends. He got the answer:

"Those who have gone down to the tomb receive no visits."

Lowe fumed and fretted. But he was helpless. The plan of Mystery defeated him. His adjutant, Sir Thomas Reade, declared:

"If I were Governor, I would bring that dog of a Frenchman to his senses; I would isolate him from all his friends, who are no better than himself; then I would deprive him of his books. He is, in fact, nothing but a miserable outlaw, and I would treat him as such. By God, it would be a great mercy to the King of France to rid him of such a fellow altogether. It was a piece of great cowardice not to have sent him at once to a court-martial instead of sending him here."

Napoleon let it be known that if any attempt was made to violate his privacy, he would take means to defend himself. Sir Thomas Reade went blustering to Longwood to accept this challenge and see the Man for himself, but when the door of the Man's room was reached his courage failed him. All he could do was to shout through the door :

" Come out, Napoleon Bonaparte. We want Napoleon Bonaparte."

In September 1819, Dr. Antommarchi, a Corsican, whom Cardinal Fesch—Grandmamma Fesch's son—had chosen to attend Napoleon, arrived on the island with two priests—a sign that public opinion in Europe was becoming a source of anxiety to the Kings. But his new doctor seems to have inspired Napoleon with very little confidence.

Perhaps the reason was that, about this time, he became very much fitter in health and began to lay out a garden near Longwood. Day after day the Man of Battles, wearing a big Panama hat, carried his spade to his garden and set diligently to work. He began again, too, to ride, because orders from England had been received extending his " limits." Even Lowe seems to have ceased to some extent from his troubling, though when Montholon gave Montchenu, King Louis' " Watchdog," a handful of beans to plant in his garden, some white and some green, the Governor at once suspected a double meaning. Napoleon usually wore a green coat at Longwood, whereas the white cockade was King Louis' symbol. Greatly worried, Lowe wrote off to Lord Bathurst in London about the beans :

" Whether," he said, " the haricots blancs and haricots verts bear any reference to the drapeau blanc of the Bourbons, and the habit vert of General Bonaparte himself and the livery of his servants at Longwood, I am unable to say ; but the Marquis de Montchenu, it appears to me, would have acted with more propriety, if he had declined receiving either, or limited himself to a demand for the white alone."

There is an expressive word which exactly characterizes a man who writes letters of this kind to his official superiors. Lowe certainly left no stone—not even a bean—unturned in his effort to obtain "that Colonial Governorship."

## CHAPTER LXXXV

### AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN

In the summer of 1820 Napoleon had another attack of his fever, a very severe attack, which robbed him of the power of getting about. Dr. Antommarchi attended him.

"He still," wrote Montholon, "complains of pain 'like a knife.' Antommarchi smiles when I ask the meaning of this internal pain which is like a cut with a penknife about two inches below the left breast."

We know better to-day what such a pain signifies. An ulcer was forming in Napoleon's stomach—according to some authorities a cancerous ulcer—Sir Arthur Keith takes this view—according to other authorities an ulcer not of cancerous type—Sir Berkeley Moynihan takes this view. The patient was compelled to remain in his chair or on his sofa—though he continued to work at his memoirs until far into the night.

It is a strange spectacle, this lighted window of Longwood, in the small hours, and this little, damp room, in which the dying Napoleon continues, with all his failing strength, the work he began in circumstances scarcely more hospitable—the work of laying the foundations of a new world. And yet how congruous the spectacle is! For the deepest meaning of the Revolution is the nobility of Man himself, his courage, his patience, his goodness of heart. The Kings and the priests had proclaimed the baseness and the sinfulness of Man, and on these foundations built their strong houses; the Revolution gave them, Kings and priests alike, the lie in their teeth. The Man of the Revolution showed to the whole world what a man,

even a man exiled and widowed and bowed down with mortal sickness, can mightily achieve.

But these labours were too much now for the hardest worker this earth has ever known. Bertrand wrote to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, begging that Napoleon might have a change since nothing but removal from St. Helena could, he believed, save his life. This letter was returned by Lowe, who of course had read it, " on account of the use of the Imperial title." Lowe is still of opinion that Napoleon is shamming, and Montchenu, King Louis' " Watchdog "—the last of the " Watchdogs "—actually tries to force his way into the sick-room, but is, happily, turned back by a sentry before he gets near it. . . .

As the year 1820 grew old Napoleon staggered under the blows of his malady. He suffered dreadful pain, and sometimes lay panting on the floor in his agony.

" Perhaps death will soon put a term to my sufferings," he cried in October. In November, during a period of relief, he said : " What a pleasant thing is rest ; my bed has become a place of happiness for me. I would not exchange it for all the thrones of the universe."

Lowe heard of these grave symptoms, but believed nothing of what he heard. He suggested that Napoleon might call in Dr. Arnott of the 20th Regiment if he required a consultation. Napoleon refused, declaring that since his appeal to Lord Liverpool had not been forwarded " he did not believe in the interest the Governor showed with regard to his health."

Christmas came and was a time of deep sadness for the little company at Longwood—further reduced now by the fact that Madame Montholon had returned to Europe for her health's sake. Napoleon was visibly failing.

" Each day," wrote the faithful Montholon, " he seemed less inclined to exertion of body or mind. He was always tired. He lounged idly in an easy chair, whereas, but a short time before, he spent the greater part of the night as well as the day in arranging the materials for his work. I often stood for some hours, waiting for him to finish a

sentence or to rouse himself from the stupor to say something more than: 'Well, my son, what's new? What shall we do?'"

In February Napoleon's circulation began to weaken and his limbs grew cold. Nothing seemed to be able to afford him warmth. He could swallow no food except meat jelly—a supply of which Lowe sent him from his own house when this fact was reported to him. The mind, once swift and keen as a sword-blade, began to become overclouded. Napoleon lost his memory and often, at night, grew rambling in his speech. When March arrived he became afflicted with severe sickness and lost a great deal of blood. He took to bed, never again to rise.

His doctor, Dr. Antommarchi, wrote to a friend on March 17, 1821:

"If the English Government does not hasten to remove him from this destructive atmosphere, His Majesty soon, with anguish I say it, will pay the last tribute to the earth. . . . I offer the *undoubted facts* stated above, in opposition to the gratuitous assertions in the English newspapers relative to the good health which His Majesty is stated to enjoy."

On the same day Montholon wrote to Pauline:

"The Emperor reckons upon Your Highness to make his real situation known to some English of influence. He dies without succour upon this frightful rock; his agonies are frightful."

Pauline applied to the British Government for leave to go to St. Helena herself. But it was too late.

Lowe's mind, indeed, seems to have been the only tranquil one on the island. On April 11, nearly a month after Napoleon had exhibited these terrible symptoms, Lowe wrote to Lord Bathurst:

"The enclosed extract of a letter from Count Montholon may merit, as usual, your lordship's perusal. . . . It may be regarded as a bulletin of General Bonaparte's health, meant for circulation at Paris."

We must not, however, blame the Governor too much for this attitude, for, on April 1, Napoleon had been persuaded to see Dr. Arnott and that worthy man had afterwards discussed his case with Lowe's adjutant, the bold Sir Thomas Reade. Here is Reade's report of what Dr. Arnott said to him :

" . . . From what I could learn generally out of Dr. Arnott's conversation, he appears to think that General Bonaparte is not affected by any serious complaint, probably more mental than any other . . . he saw no danger whatever. During his visit this morning he recommended him to rise and get shaved. He replied that he was too weak at present, that he would shave when he was a little stronger."

Napoleon had then about thirty days to live. But perhaps Dr. Arnott had no wish to share the fates of Dr. O'Meara and Dr. Stokoe. At any rate he continued his visits. There were ups and downs and sometimes the patient was able to talk. On April 14 Napoleon told Dr. Arnott that he would like to present a copy of Coxe's *Life of Marlborough* to the officers of the 20th Regiment—to which Arnott was attached. The copy had been given him by the Hon. Robert Spencer. The books were sent over during the same afternoon. Unhappily they had written on their flyleaves : " *L'Empereur Napoleon.*"

Lowe at once suspected a plot in spite of the fact that the writing was not Napoleon's, and ordered that the offending leaves should be torn out. But the officers of the regiment refused and referred the matter to the Duke of York, as Commander-in-Chief, who replied that " such a gift from Napoleon to a British regiment was most gratifying to him." There is a crumb of satisfaction in the thought that Napoleon never heard of this incident. Two days later, on April 16, Dr. Arnott changed his opinion about his patient. No longer did he suggest that Napoleon might arise and shave himself. He told Sir Hudson Lowe that, in his opinion, his patient was dying.

This news came as a severe shock, for Lowe had been

writing letter after letter to Lord Bathurst saying that there was nothing wrong. He now removed every restriction on the movements of the doctors on the island and placed all their services at Napoleon's disposal.

Meanwhile Napoleon was making his last additions to his will, which is dated April 15, 1821.

"I die," he declared in that document, "in the Apostolical Roman religion, in the bosom of which I was born more than fifty years ago.

"It is my wish that my ashes may repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people whom I have loved so well.

"I recommend to my son," the will continues, "never to forget that he was born a French prince, and never to allow himself to become an instrument in the hands of the triumvirs who oppress the natives of Europe [Austria, Prussia, and Russia]. He ought never to fight against France, or to injure her in any manner; he ought to adopt my motto: *Everything for the French people.*

"I die prematurely, murdered by the English oligarchy and its assassin; the English nation will not be slow in avenging me."

The will then refers to the men who betrayed Napoleon. Marmont, Talleyrand, and others: "I forgive them; may the posterity of France forgive them likewise."

"I thank my good and most excellent mother, the Cardinal [Fesch], my brothers Joseph, Lucien, Jerome, Pauline, Caroline, Julie [Joseph's wife], Hortense, Catherine [that good woman the daughter of the King of Würtemberg, Jerome's wife], Eugene for the interest which they have continued to feel in me. I pardon Louis for the libel which he published in 1820; it is replete with false assertions and falsified documents."

Then follows the references to the Duke of Enghien. Napoleon left large legacies to his faithful friends. Of his valet Marchand he said:

"The services which he has rendered to me are those of a friend; it is my wish that he should marry the widow, sister, or daughter of an officer of my Old Guard."

In a codicil he left £400 to a French officer, Cantillon, who had been accused, tried, and acquitted by a French jury of having tried to stab the Duke of Wellington in Paris. Napoleon looked on Wellington as "responsible for the blood of the martyrs, Ney (who was shot) and La Bédoyère, and for the crime of having despoiled the museums contrary to the text of treaties." Napoleon also declared that Cantillon had as much right to murder "the oligarch" as had Wellington to send him to St. Helena.

There is no doubt that Napoleon believed that Wellington had inspired the behaviour of Lowe and the persecutions—and executions—of his friends in Paris. In this he was misinformed, though Wellington was detested in Paris during the time that he acted there as practical dictator of France. We must not forget that Wellington opposed the desire of Blucher, the Prussian, to shoot Napoleon. It is a pity that this last codicil was added to the will, but on April 24, when it was dictated, Napoleon was falling into a delirium from which he never completely emerged. On April 26 he had ceased to be rational.

Dr. Arnott wrote on April 27 :

"General Bonaparte is worse than I have seen him yet : he is much oppressed with vomiting ; we can make nothing whatever rest on his stomach. In consequence of the constant vomiting he is very much exhausted."

"*April* 28.—The only change I could perceive in him was that I thought he did not talk so incoherently as he did in the morning."

On May 1 the delirious patient had a cold fit and lay, pale and pulseless, as if on the point of death. Then he rallied, and Montholon told him of Sir Hudson Lowe's wish that he would consent to take further medical advice.

"No," murmured Napoleon. "I know that I am dying. I have confidence in the people already about me, and I do not wish others to be called in."

The next day matters were still worse. "At times he raves, but not constantly. His strength is gone." Severe

hiccup occurred. On May 4 there was a slight rally and the poor tormented sufferer, whose agonies must have been dreadful, since there was a large perforation in the stomach, fell asleep. But on the morning of May 5 the hand of death was stretched out towards him. On that morning Napoleon was heard by Montholon to cry out: "Chief of the Army." Suddenly he sat up in bed and then sprang out of bed, gazing wildly and vacantly about him. He was with difficulty laid back again on his pillows. It was the last flicker of that heroic strength. His pulse faded away; quietness and rest enfolded him.

It may be, that in these last, gentle hours, it was granted to the soul of Napoleon to look down the long avenues of the future and behold the fruits of his endeavour. I like, at any rate, to think it was so. I like to think that that mind, so swift to pierce the gloom of coming events, was satisfied with the knowledge that only nine years remained now of their rule to the Old Kings of France, Louis XVIII and his shameful brother the Count of Artois. I like to think, too, that the Man saw the sweeping away from France of all the foes of the Revolution and the establishment of the Revolution in France's abiding love: the fitful reign of Louis Philippe; the reign of Napoleon III, the youngest son of Louis and Hortense Beauharnais, "too much Bonaparte, too little Emperor"; the march of Moltke (and Bismarck) and their Prussians on Paris in 1870 and the founding at Versailles of the German Empire; and then the twilight of the Kings in 1918, when "England and France United" went forth, side by side, to defend the New World against the Old, the spirit of the Revolution against the spirit of tyranny and oppression; the Armistice signed at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month; the treaty of Versailles.

During that last day of Napoleon's life a storm blew over the high plateau on which Longwood is situated and many trees were uprooted and many tents of the British regiments were blown down. The willow-tree beneath which the Man had been wont to sit during summer evenings was among the victims.

The tempest died away as evening approached and the sun broke again from the clouds. It was five o'clock and Napoleon lay unconscious, scarcely drawing his breath. The lines of age and care had been smoothed, as if by invisible fingers, from his face, and the watchers about the bed beheld, to their astonishment, the lovely, clear-cut features of the young hero of Italy and Egypt and Marengo.

At six minutes before six o'clock on May 5, 1821, just at the time when the sun was setting, for sunset is early at that time of year in that region, Napoleon died.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI

### THE NAMELESS DEAD

They laid the embalmed body in state with the sword of Marengo by its side and the cloak of Marengo wrapped about it—a frail body, the face exquisitely serene and with, it is said, an expression of almost unearthly tranquillity graven upon its lineaments. His cocked hat lay at the dead man's feet.

And the people of St. Helena, soldiers and townsfolk, passed before the body and gazed on it in mute wonder. Was this Napoleon ?

On May 8 the coffin was raised on the shoulders of British Grenadiers, and borne out to a waiting hearse. The way to " Napoleon's Valley," where the grave had been dug, was lined with British soldiers. Behind the soldiers stood men and women of many races, British and French, Brazilians and Chinese and negroes from the plantations. Bertrand's little son, Napoleon Bertrand, who had been born on the island and had been a " playmate " of Napoleon, headed the procession. Montholon and Bertrand were on horseback, while Madame Bertrand and her daughter Hortense had a carriage. One of Napoleon's old chargers was led behind the hearse. The rest of the procession was made up of soldiers and marines. Sir Hudson Lowe rode last of them all.

And so they bore him to Napoleon's Valley. There was no name on the coffin, for the hatred of the Kings would not even concede that the dead man should be called " Napoleon " on his coffin lid, and the spirit of Napoleon forbade that any compromise on this matter should be made with the Kings. But they fired a salute over the

grave and it is said that some of the British officers begged leave, before the coffin was lowered, to kiss that faded green cloak, spread as a funeral pall, which had wrapped the limbs of the young hero, more than twenty years before, on the battlefield of Marengo.

* * * * *

And after that Napoleon's rooms at Longwood were turned into a pigsty and a shed for cattle.

## CHAPTER LXXXVII

### THE VOICE OF FRANCE

NINETEEN years later King Louis Philippe, who had helped to drive the Old Kings, his cousins, from the throne of France, felt that throne tottering beneath himself. In his evil hour he resolved to make a last bid for the love of the French people by bringing back the body of Napoleon from St. Helena.

There were difficulties in the way, one of which was the fact that no member of the Bonaparte family was allowed to live in France. Another difficulty was the uneasy state of the relations with England. But Louis Philippe, nevertheless, persisted in his enterprise. He got the leave he required from Queen Victoria and then sent his own son, with the faithful Bertrands, father and son, Gourgaud, Las Cases—the son—and others to carry out his great undertaking.

At midnight on October 15, 1840, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Napoleon's setting foot on the island, the exhumation was begun by torchlight. Dawn cast her first feeble rays on the opened coffin, on the features of Napoleon unchanged and uneffaced by time.

At that spectacle, charged with memories so potent and so sorrowful, those who had known and loved the Man broke down and wept.

In December the ship *Louis Philippe*, which brought the body home to France, reached the port of Cherbourg. On December 15, 1840, Napoleon returned to his capital.

And that day, the voice of France was lifted up once again, the voice of tens of thousands of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, crowded along the route of the funeral

procession, in the old, immortal challenge of common men to Kings and oppressors :

"*Vive l'Empereur !*"

"Long live the Emperor !" they cried, these French folk who had come to play their part in the Emperor's burial. And the Kings and the princes, who were gathered under the great dome of the Invalides, could scarce forbear, it is said, enemies as they were at heart, to join in that strangest of salutations to the dead.

"Sire," announced the Prince of Joinville, the son of King Louis Philippe, "I bring you the body of the Emperor Napoleon."

There was a moment of silence, and then the great doors were thrown open, disclosing the uniforms of the Guard. An usher stepped forward. He announced :

"The Emperor."

Napoleon was borne in, by the soldiers of France, to that resting-place which, until this day, remains the shrine of a Nation's glory and a Nation's love.

The Man had begun his everlasting Empire over the mind and spirit of humanity.

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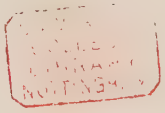

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